



Acts

Study Pack 23

Pastor Paul Julian

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Acts Chapter 22

And so we're going to continue here in the 22nd chapter of Acts.

And Paul is, as I mentioned at the end of the last lecture, he's going to enter into the prison ministry if you will. From now going forward, he is really going to spend most of his time behind _____ or in some _____. He got out for some of it, had house arrests for a lot of it, and had a lot of freedom that we'll see. But he never skipped a beat.

And I think the Christian life is truly a spiritual battle, and we don't war against flesh and blood, we war against principalities and powers and spiritual things. And so the Christian life, no doubt, is a joy to be a part of.

There's no greater life in the world than the Christian life, but it is a _____. And so we see that, and I think that's why one of the reasons, one of the many reasons why we see so many of these things detailed out in the Word of God, as we're going to see even in the next few chapters: Paul's defense before these different people.

And it's important to see this is a part of the Christian life. It's still a part of his ministry, and yet it is a battle.

Ephesians 3:1

For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,

And that's an interesting perspective, isn't it? He's saying, "I'm a prisoner of Jesus Christ."

He did not say, "I'm a prisoner of the Roman government."

He said, "I'm a prisoner of Jesus Christ."

Philippians 1:12–13

¹² But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; ¹³ So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places;

We read this passage in another lecture, and I think it's important to understand Paul saw this as a _____ of his ministry. This was not a mishap.

This was not a stroke of bad luck. This was God's will for his life, and he took it as that.

Philippians 1:13

¹³ So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places;

He very clearly saw that God had a purpose for this period of his life. And you've heard me say this before, I'll say it again, there's no such thing as laboring in vain for the Lord unless you try to do it your _____. If laboring in the Lord is trying, you try to do that according to your will, you'll find yourself spinning your wheels and not accomplishing anything.

But laboring in the Lord, when you do it his way, it is impossible for it to be in vain, even though it might be in a different way that we would like.

2 Timothy 2:9

⁹ *Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound.*

I love that passage, because Paul again is clearly saying, “Not only is this in God's will and I'm still in the ministry of God.” He's saying, “Even though I'm in bonds, the power of the word of God, the power of the gospel is not bound.”

It's an impossibility. So though the _____ is bound, it does not diminish the _____ of the message, which is God's Word.

Now, let me just read the last few verses of chapter 21 so that we put our minds into the right frame here. And remember the troublemakers from Asia came and accused him of bringing a Gentile into the temple. We saw that the chief captain steps in. He thinks Paul is the Egyptian.

Acts 21:38–40

³⁸ *Art not thou that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers?* ³⁹ *But Paul said, I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and, I beseech thee, suffer me to speak unto the people.* ⁴⁰ *And when he had given him licence, Paul stood on the stairs, and beckoned with the hand unto the people. And when there was made a great silence, he spake unto them in the Hebrew tongue, saying,*

And so we see you've got the picture here of this road, ancient road within the ruins there at Tarsus. And the claim that Paul is making, and I think it's an important claim, is he used what he had _____ to him, which was, “Hey, this is my background. I deserve to have a voice.”

And so remember the mob is stirred by the confusion.

And by the way, too, at this time is a feast time in Jerusalem, and no one knows, of course, the exact number, but it's possible that there would have been close to two million people in and around the Jerusalem area during this time. So you can imagine just how many, when you talk about a riot, and you talk about things getting out of control, and this chief captain, his job would have been to keep the peace and to keep control in that area. So they're stirred to confusion, and it's interesting, too, the celebrating, the feast, of course, that was going on right then, it's the very thing that these troublemakers are accusing Paul of being against.

So just imagine this celebration, all these extra people in Jerusalem celebrating and being a part of this feast, the very thing that they're saying that Paul is undermining, that Paul is against... It's a bad combination. So what we're going to see moving forward here is Paul answering his accusers or giving a _____ in these several different areas.

The first one is this mob, and he's being accused, and so we see him address that.

The second is going to be the council, or the Sanhedrin, which is also in Jerusalem.

Then there's a third and a fourth time, which is going to happen in Caesarea, and that's before Felix and then before Festus, and then the King Agrippa. He's waiting for the trial, and then before the Jews as well there in Rome. So we're going to see this progression as we finish out the book of Acts.

Acts 22:1–3

Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence which I make now unto you. ² (And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith,) ³ I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the Law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day.

And it's interesting that he says men and brethren, which is, again, fellow _____.
'Fathers', which would be the elders. So he's speaking directly to them, and he's also, his brethren, and he's also showing _____.

And remember, when they heard that he spoke in the Hebrew tongue, they're keeping silence.

Now remember, Paul was taught of this really well-known, really well-respected Pharisee. Now, I've got a picture here of, not that one.

And here we are, this is sort of the corner area off of the Temple Mount, where this is possibly where he would have taught, or would have been answering these people. And then later on, we see he was taken to the fortress, or taken to a castle.

Again, this is just a model. But the Antonia Fortress was well-known as to these were where the guards, the soldiers, the centurion would have been housed, and would have been off of the Temple Mount area. So we see this captain coming in and dealing with this situation.

And so, Paul is saying, "I was taught of _____, and I was taught to the perfect manner of the Law.

Why does he say that? Because there were lots of people, even Sadducees and other people in Israel in the Jewish religious leadership that did not follow the Law _____. And yet, they were Jewish, they were somewhat respected.

But in Paul's case, he sat at the feet of Gamaliel, which was the perfect manner of the Law. So everything was followed. In other words, the authority of God's word was maintained.

And so, Paul was trained by the best. And Tarsus, as well, was the center of Greek learning. So he came from a highly educated background, and he is stating that.

Is he bragging? Is he saying, "This is what my credentials are?" No, he knows his audience. He knows who these people are and what they give _____ to. And so, he is dispelling any notion that he is a hater of Israel.

He's getting that out there right off the bat to say, "I'm not a hater of Israel."

He's saying, "I was zealous towards God, trained in the perfect manner of the Law as ye all are this day."

He's saying, "I was no different than you."

Acts 22:4

⁴ *And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women.*

And he says, "And I persecuted this way." And we've seen this over and over where it was called 'the way'. Christians were referred to as 'the way'. And I like that name. I think it's a neat thing.

And so, Paul says, “I persecuted this way. I persecuted the Christians.”

And so, he's saying, “I was just like you guys.”

He establishes at the very front end where he's from, his training, it's the exactness of the manner of the Law. And then he says, “Now, not only did I have that training, but I was in the same position of understanding as you. I was in the position where I hated these Christians. I persecuted these Christians.”

Acts 22:5

⁵ As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished.

Remember, he sought out certification, license, if you will, authorization, to go and gather up and round up Christians. And he is pointing to the very priests and leaders who are right there in front of him saying, “Here are the witnesses. They know me. They know that I have done this, that I have gone to round these people up.”

And so now he's going to share his _____ in the midst of that. So he lays the groundwork.

“First of all, I don't hate Israel. I was trained in the perfect manner of the Law. And I also thought the way you thought.”

You see how he's using his personal testimony— his personal story to ramp up to what is not only his defense, but what is the _____. All through Paul's defenses, every step of the way, what is he doing? What is he doing? He's giving the gospel. He's giving the gospel every single step of the way.

So this is not a practical exercise in legal jargon or legal defense maneuvering. That's not why this is recorded. I think this is recorded for a lot of good reasons, but one is to show how Paul, in his situation where he believed God put him, he was going to use it to the utmost for God's _____ and for the _____ of the gospel.

Acts 22:6–7

⁶ And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me. ⁷ And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

Now remember, we touched on this earlier. This statement changes everything. It changed everything within Paul's mind the moment he heard it.

And I think that's why he's repeating it here again because the people who are hearing this statement are now thinking the same thing he was thinking back when he heard it the first time, which is “Why would God, true God, say to Paul, who's gathering up these horrible Christians— why would God say to him, why are you persecuting me?”

And I can almost guarantee you could hear a pin drop at this moment in this setting because these people are saying, “Wait, God spoke to you? And he asked you why you were persecuting him?”

See, the _____ between Christians and Jehovah God and truth was never there for these people. Those people were heresy. They were horrible.

They needed to be killed. They needed to be shut up. They needed to be stopped for both political reasons and religious reasons as well because they were claiming that Jesus was the Messiah. How is that possible?

So when Paul says to them, I had this experience and what do I hear from God? Why are you persecuting me? It's a powerful statement and it meant a lot to Paul just as it would have here in this moment.

Acts 22:8

⁸ And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest.

You see the link has been made? That's what happened in Paul's mind and now he's allowing that same powerful moment to be expressed here before these people.

Acts 22:9

⁹ And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me.

Now, let me just comment on this real quick because sometimes people will use this as a way to say that there's a _____ in scripture because back in Acts 9:7, it said it the other way around: that they heard the voice and here he says they heard not the voice. And so people will try to trip you up on that. So it's a very simple explanation.

When you go back into the Greek, the word 'voice' here, when you go back in the original, can mean one of two things and it's interchangeable. Sometimes it is the sound or the tone of a _____ and sometimes it is the words or the _____ or the saying of the voice. So what Paul is very clearly saying in one place it's saying we did not hear the voice. Y=that's what he's saying here, but they heard not the voice.

He's saying they didn't hear the words. In the other passage in Acts 9:7, it's saying they did hear the tone or the sound. It's not a contradiction, it's just a word and part of the translation here. So don't let anybody trip you up on that.

All it's just very clear. Did they hear the voice, the tone, the noise, the sound? Yes, did they hear the words? Paul's saying "No, they did not." Pretty simple. Let's go on.

Acts 22:10–12

And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do. And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus. And one Ananias, a devout man according to the Law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there,

And this is interesting that Paul adds these details about Ananias in front of this mob as to who came to him at this moment. It's very tactical, very wise on his part.

He doesn't just say, and Ananias, he didn't even have to give his name really. But he gives his name and then he says he's a devout man according to the Law. So again, he's making that _____. Every chance he gets, he's making that connection.

And we, although our audience most of the time is not Jewish people, we're not in Jerusalem, our conversation, our defense of the gospel, our defense of who we are in Christ needs to stick to the word of God, Our opinions are our opinions.

They're about as worthless as can be, but our stand, our position, our defense, if you will, needs to be _____ in God's Word. Very important.

What is Paul doing when he says that Ananias was a devout man according to the Law? He is establishing that we are not _____ God's Word. We are not going away from, "I'm not a part of a people that has discarded the Law." And we saw that all through the book of Acts. K

Acts 22:13–14

¹³ Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him. ¹⁴ And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth.

So Paul is saying, "I saw the One, the One the prophets foretold. The One that you claim to be seeking." He's saying, "I saw that One, capital 'O'. I saw Jesus."

Acts 22:15–17

¹⁵ For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. ¹⁶ And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord. ¹⁷ And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance;

So we see that Paul shares his testimony. We see that he, in the midst of sharing his testimony, declares that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah, was the Christ. And how was it confirmed? Through Jesus Christ Himself.

This is what Paul is sharing. Now let's touch on something real quick because of the wording. Again, this is one of those things where this verse is misused to say that you have to be water baptized to be saved because it says, 'wash away thy sins'. That must be what it means.

Well, what is it really saying? Do we need to be water baptized for salvation? Of course. we know the answer is not. Here's what I want you to notice. Notice where the break comes.

So it says, arise and be baptized. And then it says, now wash away thy sins, doing what? because you know how we have a modifier. So 'calling on the name of the Lord' is the thing that _____ 'washing away the sins'. So coming to Christ as your Savior, calling upon the name of the Lord, which is a phrase that is used to put your trust in Jesus Christ, that is what _____ the washing away of the sins.

Very simple explanation. It's how it's broken down, and it's an easy explanation. And by the way, why would it even be said this way? Why would this wording even be used? What was Paul doing up until this point that he got saved?

He's persecuting Christians. He's killing Christians. He's hating the things of God, ignorantly in some ways, yes, sincerely, yes, but still rebelliously, sinfully, rebelliously wrong. So for Paul to say that water baptism, which we know is what? It's a picture, it's an _____ in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.

What in Paul's case did that deal with? It's the same for all of us. It washes away our sins. But for Paul, at this moment, what did it do in his life? What did it wash away? The water baptism washed something away? No, the picture of that because he trusted Christ. But what did it do? The hateful sin that he exhibited and carried out against the Christians, it's wiped away.

It's forgiven, it's paid for. You see what he's trying to say here? So washed away sins, _____ . By water baptism, _____ .

The baptism was the picture of what God did on the inside to Paul, which was an unbelievable thing to say that all these horrible things that he was doing to those Christians, that it could be washed away through the grace of God, through the power of His blood, that's an amazing thing. That's a beautiful picture, and that's what Paul wants them to see. We know as well, and you all know this, but I think it's a great illustration of how water baptism does not save you.

You don't have to have that to be saved as the thief on the cross. We know the thief on the cross trusted Christ, believed in Christ. He's there, right there talking to him. No chance to be baptized. No chance to really even do any good works of any kind. And yet, he is saved.

1 Corinthians 1:17

¹⁷ For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

No, of course he did. and of course he believed in it. He believed that we're commanded to do so. But Paul clearly separates the gospel _____ from the _____ of obedience in water baptism. Two separate things.

One illustrates the other. One is by faith, one is after you have come to Christ.

Acts 22:17–21

¹⁷ And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; ¹⁸ And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me. ¹⁹ And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee: ²⁰ And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him. ²¹ And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.

Now, quick note here. He mentions this trance, and we've come all the way through Acts, and we've seen Paul come to Christ. We've seen his testimony. We've seen these different things, and we've not seen that account of him being in that trance in Jerusalem.

And so, most likely, this is what I believe anyway, that would have taken place in Acts chapter 9, when he first came into Jerusalem, and it just doesn't appear in the account, in Luke's account, until this point. It's not really significant. It's just interesting that he doesn't mention that until this point.

He was so _____ against the Christians. He's dragging them out of their homes to be killed. He hated Christianity, and Paul is making this clear to these people as a way of showing, “Hey, I was where you are” And I think it's important to pause for a second here and understand what this meant in his life.

So, I'm going to give you a handful of things that I feel like, because this was a fact, because this was a huge impact on his life in several different ways.

Number one, I think maybe this is why Paul could sincerely say that he was willing to give up his _____ if his _____ brothers could be saved. You know, again, that is a statement that if someone makes it, they say, “Yeah, whatever...” Or, I don't know that that's sincere.

I think when Paul said that, it was sincere. And why was it sincere? Because this is something that was very, very heavy in his life. This was a huge impact in his life. The reality of when he came to Christ. The _____ of realizing what he had done to these Christians.

Second, let me give you this. I think his concept of grace was based on such a deep appreciation for it, because he knew outside of God's grace, he was utterly lost. And what did he call himself? The _____ of _____. Again, I think that was a genuine statement by Paul, because he knew where he had come from, And so, I also think the next thing I want to mention is that he saw no sacrifice was too great for Christ.

He saw no sacrifice was too great for Christ. Why? What was Paul's background? Well, the depth of God's love and grace, what that meant to Paul, because the reality of what he knew he came from. His _____ for God was _____ on what God _____ for him.

As it should be, students, for all of us. Because the Bible says we've all come short of the glory of God. In Paul's case, yeah, we would say, "Man, the sin that he was involved in, the horribleness that he was involved in, leading up to his salvation, is just almost hard to imagine. Hard to think of."

But the fact is, the impact that it had on his life, and you see him sharing that in this testimony with these people in Jerusalem. We also should have that same exact mindset. Our love for God should be based on what He did for us. Now, I also want to make a note here as well, and I think this is important.

If you are working with people as a pastor, or you're working with people as a lady in a church, you're counseling with someone, or working with someone, maybe with addictions or difficult things in their past, what we do see in Paul's life, which is a very important principle of God's grace, is that Paul's value was not attached or diminished or calculated in any way based on his sin _____ he got _____.

What we tend to do (it's human nature, and the devil's very good at this) is to say, "Well, what you did before you got saved will now determine what your value or effectiveness can be for Christ moving forward." That is not true. Does it have, in a practical sense, some effect? In some ways, it can. But it does not diminish your value or your _____ for Christ after you are saved.

The only factor, that the past or before salvation plays into how God can use you, is simply that, how God is going to use you...

And I would say this: I know for a fact there are people that within our church and within our ministry that I cannot effectively reach, but someone with a much more wicked or sinful past before they came to Christ (although that is no excuse; there's no reason to seek that)—I'm simply saying that person, when they become dedicated, can reach people that I cannot reach.

I think what we're seeing is that God is using Paul. Yes, that was horrible. What you did was horrible, but who can be more effective to this audience than someone who can say to them, "I was where you are?"

You see what I'm saying? So we have to be so careful that as we're counseling people or working with people or ministering to people, when we encourage those to live holy, to stay out of sin, we also make it clear that those who have come out of sin or a sinful life, and they come to Christ, their capability, their capacity, their amount to be able to minister and do the work of the Lord is not _____ because of that past.

I think we see that in Paul's life. Now, does that mean that if you grow up, especially in a Christian home, and you know truth, and you reject truth, and you squander opportunities away, that you will have accomplished _____ for God? Of course.

I'm not saying that that's what this applies, but people, especially like Paul, before they're saved, before they know better— they're doing what they think they should be doing. We have to be so careful that when we say, “What is God capable of?” Look at what God did with Paul, and yet his past was horrific before he got saved.

So here's the other thing that I think that Paul was so convinced of because of his past, because of what he came through, he was so convinced that the gospel was the solution for _____, _____, _____.

He was convinced that the gospel was the solution for all people. Nobody, nobody was outside the bounds of God's grace. How was he so convinced of that? Because of what God's grace did for him personally.

And the last thing I'll give you is this: His level of previous deception was so great that the more he learned truth, he loved it even more. So his deception and misunderstanding before is confusion.

It was so great that as he learns more truth, he just loves it even more. He embraces it even more. And again, I think that's because of that background. And it's just a picture of God's grace and how he uses every situation, no matter what it is, and uses it for his glory.

Acts 22:21–22

²¹ *And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.*

²² *And they gave him audience unto this word, and then lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live.*

What was it that he said? What was it that all of a sudden turned this thing upside down? Well, first of all, he's declaring Jesus of Nazareth. And he's declaring that to _____ the Son of God.

But then he says that God says to him, I will send thee unto the _____. Well, these Jewish people, right then and there, they're like, “That's it. We're done. You know, this can't be God. That couldn't have been God that was speaking to him— to send him to the Gentiles.”

Acts 22:23–24

²³ *And as they cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air,* ²⁴ *The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging; that he might know wherefore they cried so against him.*

And this chief captain, he's got his hands full. We keep seeing him having to jump in. And so he steps in. Again, what is the main thing this captain cares about? Keep the peace. Keep things calm. Why? Otherwise, he's going to lose his neck. He's going to lose his head. He's going to lose his job. So, he brings him into the castle.

This is a scourge, by the way. So, you've got sort of a whip, and what they would have done is, in those leather straps, they would have embedded pieces of either rock, sharp rock, or glass, any sharp object where they would beat the person. So, basically, it's almost gruesome to think about this, but it says that they were going to examine him by scourging.

So, in other words, “Let's see if you keep saying that while we're ripping your back to pieces with this scourging.” It's just horrible.

Again, Paul's wise.

He doesn't want to be scourged. He's willing to do whatever for God, but if there's a way around it, why not?

Acts 22:26

²⁶ When the centurion heard that, he went and told the chief captain, saying, Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman.

And what was the law? All Romans had a right to _____. You couldn't punish without, or weren't supposed to, punish without being first _____.

Acts 22:27–28

²⁷ Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea. ²⁸ And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was free born.

Now this is the chief captain speaking. You have to understand this story developing before our eyes. He said, “With great sum, I obtained this freedom, or my freedom.”

And most likely, this captain had been a slave, but slaves could, if they had enough money, they could _____ for their own _____. They could obtain citizenship, and what he's saying is, “That's at stake.”

In other words, if he improperly handles this situation with Paul, what he purchased for a great sum of money, freedom and citizenship, could be forfeited. And that's why he's coming to Paul and saying, “Hey, you better tell me the truth. Are you a Roman citizen?”

And Paul says, now he doesn't answer him, he says, “But I was free born. I'm a Roman citizen, and I didn't pay for my citizenship. My parents were Roman citizens. I was born into Roman citizenship.”

Acts 22:29–30

²⁹ Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him: and the chief captain also was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.

³⁰ On the morrow, because he would have known the certainty wherefore he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him from his bands, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down, and set him before them.

And so now, this is, you know, the chief captain stepping in again.

And now there's going to be this hearing on this matter. Paul is a Roman citizen that spoke Greek, yet he was a highly educated. He was highly educated in Hebrew. So again, it's no mistake that God is using Paul with this background, with these different credentials.

And what did we see in 1 Corinthians 16:9?

1 Corinthians 16:9

⁹ For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.

A great door, a great amount of opportunity, but yet great adversaries. So Paul _____ the _____ through the _____.

How did he do that? How could he stay focused? How could he keep that perspective?

1 Peter 5:6–7

⁶ Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: ⁷ Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

This says, “Cast all your care.”

Well, what falls under the category of _____? Your food, your shelter, your raiment, your purpose, your relationships, your plans, your goals, your finances... All means all, and Paul understood that. Paul is seeing the mission through the pain because he's saying, “I'm going to place myself, just like Peter said, under the mighty hand of God, and my cares are in his hands. I cast them to him. All of my cares are in His hands.”

Is this an easy thing to do? No, but here's what I will tell you. The flip side of this: If you're going to serve God, which is going to require stamina, it's going to require commitment, it's going to require having the proper _____.

And when we have a proper incentive, we do the task much more effectively. When we have the proper incentive, we stay to the task much more faithfully. If the incentive is based on you...

So let me give you a few: I don't want to mess up. I don't want to get ridiculed. I don't want to ever be wrong. I don't want someone to lie about me.

If those are a part of your incentive, what is the basis of you carrying on? It's depending on _____. Peter said: Cast it upon him, put yourself under his mighty hand, and he will sustain you. Which then, you don't have to worry about, “Well, what if I mess up, or what if this happens, or what if that happens?” And what does that do? It removes your _____.

It keeps you from your dependence on you. When you worry about all these things that are you. That's your incentive, that's your level of stamina, and that's your level of faithfulness. You're not going to last long. And that's where we see Paul maintaining that.

1 Peter 5:10

¹⁰ But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.

You see the, how this works? Do you see the progression? Peter explains this. Paul knew it, and Paul lived it. And by the way, it says _____ for a _____.

Even if we have the rest of our lives suffering, it's still a short while compared to eternity. But look at the process, look at what happens. When you don't depend on you, when you put all your cares upon God, there is, and through suffering, he's going to make you perfect. Does that mean sinless? No, it means complete. It means mature.

In Christ, establish, strengthen, and settle you. Paul, which is our example here, willing to endure anything for the sake of the gospel. He did not lose that focus, and we're going to see that all the way through.

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