

VOYAGER

Experiences That Shape Our Faith

About the Series: Experiences are powerful and can shape our Christian faith. But experiences should not be what defines our faith. Rather, it should serve to strengthen our faith and affirm what we already know to be the facts of our faith as recorded in the Scriptures. In this sermon series, we explore the journeys of Apostle Paul and how encountering life-changing experiences can teach valuable life lessons to voyagers like us who are on a journey called life.

Part 13

I Live a Life That...

Acts 20:17-38 | Dr. Stephen G. Tan

DISCUSS

Christians who finish well are those who stay committed to the Gospel, follow the Word of God faithfully, and engage the culture to win people to Christ without ever compromising their biblical convictions. The apostle Paul talked about five things in his own life that he strived for and lived out, which can serve as a reminder for how we are to live our lives, so that our lives can be called approved by God. Read Acts 20: 17-38.

I live a life that PASSES CLOSE INSPECTION (v. 17-18)

Paul did not live a double life, but instead his life was genuine, authentic and transparent.

- Why don't some Christians actively encourage people to get close to them and examine their life and actions, to put themselves under accountability?
- Are you one of those people? Or are you someone who is not afraid to be found out because you have nothing to hide?

- Like Paul, are you able to welcome others to look at your life and closely examine it to see if you truly are a Christ-follower?

I live a life that is DEDICATED TO SERVING GOD (v.19-21)

Paul faithfully served the Lord with humility, in spite of the many trials and challenges brought about by the unbelieving Jews in many of the cities he evangelized.

- How did Paul serve the Lord, so that evangelism and discipleship were not burdensome chores to him in spite of those trials and challenges he went through (Colossians 3:23-24)?
- What does it mean to you that when you serve others, it is really something you do for the Lord?
- How are you serving the Lord in the vocation (occupation) you have been called to do?
- How does dedicating your life to serving God through the work that He blessed you with rid you of your own selfish ambitions and pride?

I live a life that is FOCUSED ON FINISHING WELL (v. 22-24)

Paul was led by the Holy Spirit to return to Jerusalem and he knew that it wouldn't be an easy road, but difficult and challenging.

- How would you respond to God's call if you were in Paul's shoes, knowing that more trials and tribulations were what awaited him? Would you press on and persevere? Will you continue in your relationship with Him if you don't get your way, if your prayers are not answered in accordance with your own will?
- How would you want to finish well in the race of life?
- How would you focus on finishing well in God's eyes, just like the apostle Paul?

I live a life that FULFILLS MY RESPONSIBILITIES (v. 25-31)

Paul had fulfilled all of his responsibilities in evangelizing, discipling, and mentoring the church Elders of the Ephesian church. He taught them the "whole counsel of" God's Word and trained them to handle God's Word properly.

- What have been your responsibilities in your life? How are you fulfilling them?
- As a follower of Christ, are you fulfilling your responsibility of sharing the Gospel to people you know need to hear it?

- How are you fulfilling your responsibilities at home? Are you forgiving one another? Are you a good steward of the resources and time God has given you?
- At the end of your life, can you tell the Lord that you've fulfilled your responsibilities as a follower of Jesus Christ?

I live a life that ACKNOWLEDGES GOD IS IN CONTROL (Job 1:21b, Psalm 113:2-4)

These writers recognized the need to acknowledge that God is in control and is to be praised in whatever situation He allows us to go through. And it was very freeing for them!

- Do you acknowledge that God is in control?
- What happens if you fully realize and accept that He is indeed in control?
- How would you uplift the name of God who is in charge and entrust everything to Him?

REFLECT

To be a true follower—a disciple—of Jesus Christ is to truly and genuinely reflect Christ from the inside out consistently, when everyone is watching and when no one is watching. Can it be said of you that you are a true follower of Jesus Christ? Is your life approved by God? Do you really live out the truths of the Scriptures so that you can finish well?

PRAY

Heavenly Father, thank You for helping me to understand how I should really live my life in order to finish well. May I be able to say the things that the apostle Paul said of himself, to live a life that passes close inspection, a life that is dedicated to serving You, focusing on finishing well and fulfilling my responsibilities that You have entrusted to my care. And Lord, help me to live a life acknowledging that You are indeed in control, that I can fully trust You in living out my faith in order to finish well. In Jesus' name. Amen.