**Unstoppable - wk 36 – The Farwell Sermon**

**As you can tell from the title today is pretty serious. If you’ve ever been in a relationship, you know goodbyes can be hard... I have an announcement to follow...**

**Acts is Jesus: The Sequel. Luke Vol 2 – The “what now?”**

**Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”**

**28 yrs since Jesus’ resurrection – Paul’s in Ephesus (3 yrs)**

**Paul and a team of eight companions meet up in Troas for seven days – before they head to Jerusalem.**

**Acts 20:7 On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. (Sunday’s – the day of worship) Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight. (Long…) 8 There were many lamps in the upstairs room where we were meeting. (windows were open) 9 Seated in a window was a young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep as (Ted) Paul talked on and on. (Trying to stay awake) When he was sound asleep, he fell to the ground from the third story and was picked up dead. (Funny, but not funny – reason we don’t have windows) 10 Paul went down, threw himself on the young man and put his arms around him. “Don’t be alarmed,” he said. “He’s alive!” 11 Then he went upstairs again and broke bread and ate. (Sure, would get their attention back) After talking until daylight, he left. 12 The people took the young man home alive and were greatly comforted. (Moral of story - Attend church on Sunday and try not to fall asleep.)**

**Just a thought - Don't feel bad if you fall asleep at church.**

**But just know you might die and I'm not sure if I can raise you. BTW - it is good to know that even Paul had people fall asleep on him.**

**(MAP - Paul leaves Taros) Acts 20:13 We went (Luke and the others) on ahead to the ship and sailed for Assos, where we were going to take Paul aboard. He had made this arrangement because he was going there on foot. (They sailed – he walked) 14 When he met us at Assos, we took him aboard and went on to Mitylene. 15 The next day we set sail from there and arrived off Chios. The day after that we crossed over to Samos, and on the following day arrived at Miletus.**

**Paul walks on foot thru some towns – and jumps aboard ship with the others – headed home after 5 years on mission.**

**He wants to see his friends one more time - 16 Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus to avoid spending time in the province of Asia, for he was in a hurry to reach Jerusalem, if possible, by the day of Pentecost. (holiday) 17 From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church. (Meet me on the beach)**

**They arrive - knowing this was his last time - he shares his heart.**

**Reveals Paul's shepherd heart - and what is important.**

**The only recorded talk from Paul to Christian in Acts.**

Paul's Farewell – 4 things Paul talks about

**1. He reminds them - of His time with them (the good times)**

**Acts 20:18 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.**

**\*\* He reminds them - what to look for in a good shepherd**

* **Look for a pastor that models a godly life before you.**

**18 “You know how I lived the whole time I was with you,**

* **Look for a pastor that doesn't think he's better than you.**

**19 I served the Lord with great humility (I did not act like a celebrity)**

* **Look for a pastor that is not afraid to be transparent.**

**19 with tears (broken and real) and in the midst of severe testing... (You saw me under pressure – I was not perfect or plastic.)**

* **Look for a pastor that can preach and explain God's word well.**

**20 I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you… (helped your spiritual growth - and made sense)**

* **Look for a pastor that gets fully engaged.**

**20 (I) have taught you publicly and from house to house. (Not isolated)**

* **Look for a pastor that is not racially divisive.**

**21 I have declared to both Jews and Greeks (Was not selective w/people)**

* **Look for a pastor that boldly proclaims the gospel!**

**21 I have declared… that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus. (Was not afraid to preach the whole gospel)**

**Repentance= submission to Jesus *and* faith in Jesus.**

**A gospel without repentance is not the gospel.**

**Later says - Acts 20:27 “I proclaimed the whole will of God.”**

**No candy-coated self-help sermons. No playing church.**

**That's what to look for in a pastor, me or anybody:**

**An example you can see / humble / broken / transparent / God centered / preaches God's word / fully engaged / unprejudiced.**

**2. He tells them - his immediate plans**

**Acts 20:22 “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 life belongs to Jesus - can you say that?) 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.**

**I am like a runner, that will not quit.**

**Notice, “the task Jesus has given me.”**

**\*\* He tells them - I am to run my race (my task) – not your race.**

**I think of Olympic runners - they are there to win and finish. It is a victory many times to just finish the race. Psalm 16:8 - I keep my eyes always on the Lord. With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken.**

**\*\* He tells them - Sometimes all we know is what we are to do today.**

**V22 …compelled by the Spirit, I am going… not knowing what will happen....**

**I know what I am to do today. I will preach Jesus and go to *Jerusal.***

**Don't what’s ahead, but I know where I am supposed to be.**

**Trusting and walking in God’s will is most often obeying what you know to do and walk it out day by day. Most of our life is right here.**

**If I can’t find PURPOSE and JOY in the mundane of serving God, I’ll NEVER find them anywhere. \*\* Luke 16:1-12 - Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much,**

**God won’t give our life mapped out - God's word is direction enough to run on - But occasionally God gives us glimpses - the Vive is an example 2009 – opened in 2017.**

**3. He warns them of wolves**

**Acts 20:25 “Now I know that none of you among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom will ever see me again. (Gets heavy - meals, laughter, miracles, struggles, assault, you know I love you, this is goodbye) 26 Therefore, I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of any of you. (I gave everything I had) 27 For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God. (KJV) “The full counsel of truth”**

**I did not hold back - I know I have done my best to bring the whole truth of God to you, I didn’t avoid the tough stuff.**

**I will answer to God as a shepherd – I did my part, I am innocent of any of God’s Judgement on you. it is now up to you now.**

**He says be careful because not everyone does this - 28 Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. (Talking to the elders - our elders) Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. (The redeemed are Jesus' property) 29 I know that after I leave, savage wolves (blood thirsty people) will come in among you and will not spare the flock.**

**\*\* He warns - Look out for blood thirsty people – Spiritual Zombies**

**They come as savage wolves, hungry for power not caring for people.**

**Paul later rights a letter to their pastor about these wolves - 2 Timothy 4:2 Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. 5 But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist (messenger), fulfill your ministry.**

**We have the Acts of the Apostles (ACTS), but there is also,**

**Acts of the Apostates - hungry for power, they don’t care about people, want honor, seek their own desires, do not preach the whole word of God, teach strange doctrines (fables).**

**He goes on to warn them of not only from the outside - but form the inside too - Acts 20:30 Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. (Their motivation is their ego) 31 So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears. (Heartfelt warning)**

**\*\* Warns- Some of our biggest problems will be from with-in the church**

**Those that say and look like Christian leaders, but they distort the truth for their own desires. They lead people away from the Gospel.**

**They stand in pulpits, podcasts, content providers, want likes.**

**4th His Final Words - He Challenges them!**

**Acts 20:32 “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.**

**I release you to God. BTW - There comes a moment - when you have to release your kids, friends, family into God's hands.**

**33 I have not coveted anyone’s silver or gold or clothing. (I was not getting rich) 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.’ ” (Quotes Matt’s gospel - Jesus’ sermon on the mount – within 30 yrs MT & MK are in circulation)**

* **He challenges them - Live diligent lives (v28,31)**

**V28 – keep watch over yourselves and others! (Notice care for others…)**

**V32 – be on your guard from false teachers! (Know what you believe and why)**

**v31 – stay in the word! (Read it, think about it, obey it, speak it, share it)**

**If I were to never see you again, this is my challenge to you.**

**He said it is these things, “which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.” (V32)**

* **He challenges them - Live Generous lives.**

**We see this thru the NT, a life of generosity is a sign of knowing Jesus.**

**A life that that walks in Jesus... is a life filled with generosity.**

**In church / with others / in private / in public / as an example**

**Generous with all I have – material and spiritual blessing.**

**God what I have is yours.**

**Acts 20:36 When Paul had finished speaking, he knelt down with all of them and prayed. (Powerful image) 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. (Walked him to ship- waved bye) Acts 21:1 - After we had torn ourselves away from them, we put out to sea and sailed straight to Kos. (From there – they head to Jerusalem)**

**What follows is the beginning of the end for Paul.**

**So, Paul says goodbye - It's like this - The Match vs. the Lighter - one will burn out - one will last because it is filled (HS) - but it can be blown out (discouraged, grow cold, dry) But your filled with the Spirit.**

**Paul says to keep the fire burning and spark any dead flame: How? Remember all God has done / meet together regularly / serve each other / be generous / study God’s word, know it / pray = these things spark the flames.**

**\*\*\* My Big Announcement - today's message is called a pastor’s farewell... but not for me. Life Teams start next month!**

**Four seasons (eras) of Livingway – so far: (pics)**

**We have been blessed to minister to thousands of people over the years – if only for a season.**

* **(2003-2004) The retail center – 18 months (after 5 mths in a house)**

**Biggest challenge - The leadership dilemma**

* **(2004-2006) The UA Theater – 18 months**

**Biggest challenge - The death of Louie O.**

* **(2006-2017) The AMC Theater – 11 years – The Reboot**

**Biggest challenge - My cancer and recovery**

* **(2007-present) The Vive – 6 years**

**Biggest challenge - The Covid pandemic**

**I do not know what God has for us next. What this race will look like this yr or the next 10 yrs - what the biggest challenge facing us will be.**

**I know one thing – we will continue to do what we know we are to do today – preach Jesus and live generous lives.**

**Acts 20:24 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.**

**You are invited to join us on this adventure.**