

ALL IN TO BUILD FOR OUR FUTURE

“The God of heaven Himself will prosper us: therefore we His servants will arise and build...So we built...for the people had a mind to work. A good person leaves an inheritance for their children’s children...” **Nehemiah 2:20; 4:6; Proverbs 13:22**
(NKJV)



This Week’s Thought – August 27, 2017

“When they came to him, he said to them: ‘You yourselves know how I lived among you the entire time from the first day that I set foot in Asia, serving the Lord with all humility and with tears, enduring the trials that came to me through the plots of the Jews.’” Acts 20:18-19 (NRSV)

In Acts 20 we encounter Paul asserting his leadership and credibility to offer spiritual direction and counsel to the church in Ephesus. What stands out to me in this passage is the way in which he models an integrated life.

Paul goes to great lengths to remind this infant church of the truth that he shared with them- *“repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus”* (v. 21); And yet, it is impossible for Paul to separate the truth of the gospel from his personal embodiment of the renewing power of God in Christ. The hope of the Christian faith is never found in abstract propositions or clever turns of phrase. It is always located in the man or woman filled with the life of God and being daily conformed to the likeness of Christ.

As we seek to embody the Christian faith in our lives and local communities (now more so than ever in the days and times that we are in), Paul’s example encourages us in three ways. First, his life is a picture of humility. Just as the Lord Jesus humbled himself in taking on human flesh, so too are we meant to live lives of humble gratitude, moving away from empty love of self and moving towards love for others.

Linked to this, Paul secondly encourages tears. I believe this is a call to empathy. It is an invitation to bear one another’s burdens. Weep with those who weep and mourn with those who mourn. Finally, Paul’s words to us are words of endurance, especially in the face of trial and challenge. **At its core, this is a call to be people of substance; people who follow God faithfully in spite of our circumstances. People who have so deeply encountered the goodness of God that we are able to stand firm in every season of life.**

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Humility. Tears. Endurance. Paul embodied these virtues in his own life in profoundly transformative ways. His integrated life showed the power of God at work in everyday circumstances. May we likewise seek a similar faith, following Christ in word and deed, showing how the faith that we profess continues to transform and empower us to live and to love as Christ has loved us first. (1 John 4:19)

Prayer of reflection you might pray this week: “Dear God, bless me with right answers and inspire me to take right action. I will use the wisdom I receive from You in ways that are beneficial to others and myself, that bring You glory. The way to my highest good is made clear by Your activity of perfect love. I trust the power of Your Divine love, and with abiding faith, I pray that Your Divine love will instill wisdom within me. I seek to follow a Divinely-directed path today and forevermore. This is my prayer in the matchless, wonderful and compassionate name of Jesus, Amen!”

“And then God answered: “Write this. Write what you see. Write it out in big block letters so that it can be read on the run. This vision-message is a witness pointing to what's coming. It aches for the coming—it can hardly wait! And it doesn't lie. If it seems slow in coming, wait. It's on its way. It will come right on time.” Habakkuk 2:2-3 (MSG)

Yours in Christ, Pastor King