

# The Life Challenge

*"I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." John 10:10*

**Sermon Series:** Empowered  
**Title:** Practicism  
**Speaker:** Matt Ewert  
**Text:** Acts 20:17 - 21:15  
**Date:** March 4, 2018



## WARM-UP

### Running away – Running toward:

- Your family is watching a movie; depending on how old your kids or grandkids are, the movie may have some scary moments. Share a story from your experience where one of your (grand)kids ran from the room in order not to see the scary moments.
- When the kids are really engaged in the story on screen, where will you find them in the room?

## DISCUSSION

### REVIEW:

Acts 20:17-38

- Paul's farewell to the Ephesian leaders – weeping and embracing
  - ⇒ Paul's famous address: 20:20-24 – Finishing the race
  - ⇒ Paul exhorts the leaders: 20:28-31
    - \* Keep watch over yourselves (overseers) and the flock of God
    - \* Shepherd the church of God
    - \* Be on guard

Acts 21: 1-17

- Paul is determined to go to Jerusalem and to his destiny
- Paul is ready to die if necessary in Jerusalem – vv. 13,14

### "Hitching Your Wagon"

- **Paul and Obedience: Practicism** (moving just from theory to actually doing the thing)
  - ⇒ When the Holy Spirit gives direction, Paul binds his own spirit to that voice...*the wagon of his spirit gets hitched to the Holy Spirit.* In this way, Paul's own spirit is compelled and constrained to be obedient to the revelation of the Holy Spirit.
  - ⇒ Paul is a man committed to obedience to the voice and leading of God, no matter what that means. Spirit-empowered-Paul is a man constrained to do what the Holy Spirit calls him to do.
  - ⇒ Paul could do no other, not because he was physically unable to, but because he had chosen a life of obedience. The voice of the Spirit had a direct bearing on his practicism.

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**Sermon Series:** Empowered  
**Title:** History is a Story Written by the Finger of God  
**Speaker:** Steve Berg  
**Text:** Acts 16:1-34  
**Date:** February 18, 2018



## DISCUSSION

- **Where are we running to?**
  - ⇒ "Legalism we must run **from**. Obedience we must run **towards**."
  - ⇒ "Legalism has become a word of convenience for us, a smokescreen that is used far too often to excuse us from obedience."
  - ⇒ Obedience as delight:
    - \* If I love God, then what could be my greater joy than to practice with my heart, body, soul and mind the very things that I know reveal His character and are His delight.
    - \* Obedience is a mark of our identity. Jesus said, "You are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings." John 8:31 NLT
- **Obedience is costly:**
  - ⇒ Paul: "I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God." Acts 21:24
  - ⇒ Jesus: "...though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." Philippians 2:6-8

### So What?

"Holy Spirit empowerment" is a short-cut to say that "we dream of a community of people empowered by, responding to, and walking in the fullness of the Holy Spirit...it is doing and experiencing things only possible when the living God is at work." Psalm 40:8 (ESV) "I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart."

- How would you measure your "delight" when you are called to obedience?
- Is obedience sometimes pretty ordinary? If so, can you give examples?
- Pastor Matt has used the word "radical." Does the word 'radical' bug you? Why or why not?
- What does this 'radical obedience' mean for us?
- Pastor Matt ventures "that there is a correlation (relationship, connection) between radical obedience and Holy Spirit empowerment." How would you express that? Can you give examples?

### Prayer Enhancement:

- Confession and repentance: Obedience (you know how you should respond) can be resisted and that resistance can be a persistent, nagging thing. Is the Holy Spirit convicting you of some disobedience? James 5:16
- In what situations are we weak and unable to respond positively to the Holy Spirit's prompting? How should we pray? Romans 8:26-27