



SERIES: ACTS - WHEN THE WORLD TURNED UPSIDE DOWN
MESSAGE TITLE: "UPSIDE DOWN CONFIDENCE IN UNCERTAIN TIMES"

SPEAKER: BRAD WILLIAMS
DATE: SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2020

MESSAGE SUMMARY

BIBLICAL TEXT(S): *Acts 20:16-38*

In Acts chapter 20, Paul says goodbye to his friends from the city of Ephesus. Though his words were meant for them, what he says gives us a personal peek into Paul's life and his values. As he talks about his life and what he anticipates is coming, it is clear that Paul knows he is where he is supposed to be, doing what he's supposed to be doing, and he's okay with whatever happens to him, even if it's unpleasant and unwelcome. Looking at this text, we can see three commitments that gave Paul this confidence. He:

- Pursued the God-guided life rather than the "good life."
- Chose to be a servant instead of a master
- Was captivated by the Gospel of the Kingdom, not by fear

We can embrace these in our lives even as he did in his.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help lead your group through a progression of engagement with the Bible passage(s) and the speaker's message. These can help your group understand and apply the teaching more profitably

LEAN IN

These are icebreakers and warm ups, mostly just to get the group talking and start the flow of conversation. Choose one and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.

1. What example or story stood out to you in Sunday's sermon? Why was it significant to you?
2. What is the most unexpected thing that has happened to you this past week?
3. When you hear the word "driven" what people, images, or ideas come to your mind?
4. Right now, in this season what is most important to you? Don't overthink it. Just share the first thing that comes into your head.

LOOK DOWN

These are questions about the Bible passage(s) and observations about what's been read. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max.

1. How does Paul describe his life and work in verses 17-21? What drove him? What was most important to him?
2. What compelled Paul to go to Jerusalem? What did he expect when he got there?

cont.

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3. How does Paul describe his life's aim?
4. Looking at Paul's biography and description of his own life here, how did following God impact his life (both for good and for bad)?
5. After reading this passage, how would you describe Paul's life? What was most important to him?

LOOK OUT

These questions help connect the world of the Bible to today. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max.

1. In his sermon, Pastor Brad talked about "the good life." How would you describe the good life? How do you see people in our world chasing after the good life?
2. Who do you know (or know of from your own experience or from history) that is a good example of living the "God-guided life" like Paul?
3. Paul saw himself as a humble servant. What do you think it might look like to live with humility in today's world? Where do you see this in the church? Do you see examples of people living out the opposite in the church?
4. How have you heard of people being "compelled by the spirit" or told by God to do something? What do you think that can look like in today's world?
5. When people follow God today, what kind of outcome do you think they expect? How does this passage challenge or support our usual expectations?

LOOK IN

These are questions that help you consider personal application. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max.

1. Do you think your life is more guided by God or guided by a quest for the good life? Why do you think this is? What might it look like for God to be the guide of your life?
2. Do you see yourself as the master of your own life or as a servant? How does this passage and Pastor's Brad's message encourage or challenge you?
3. Have you ever been "compelled by the spirit" to do something? What happened?
4. In this passage, Paul shares his mission statement, his aim in all things (verse 24), which gave him the confidence to know he was where he was supposed to be. What might your own mission statement look like as you think about where God has called you to be right now?
5. What has been the outcome when you have done what you thought God was asking you to do? How did it match up to your expectations? How does this challenge or encourage you?

cont.

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LIVE IT OUT

These action steps help apply this week's message to day to day life. Choose one question and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.

1. Do you find that you are more guided by what you want rather than what God wants for you? How can your group (or a friend or family member) pray for and encourage you this week as you seek God's guidance? What might need to change in your thinking or behavior to make this possible?
2. Is God asking you to do something difficult right now or are you confused about what he wants you to do? Write down the things you think he might be calling you to do and pray over them this week. Spend some time in silence listening for his voice and direction.
3. Have you found yourself disappointed after following God's ways didn't turn out how you expected? Tell God how you're feeling. Ask him to give you his perspective on the situation. Ask your group (or a friend or family member) to pray with you as you seek to see things through God's eyes.

Thanks to Ashleigh Rich and the Adult Discipleship Team for this week's notes and questions, as well as Charissa Burns (@charissaburnsstudio on Instagram) for her illustrated notes, which normally appear on the following page.

