

“I never shrank back from telling you what you needed to hear, either publicly or in your homes. I have had one message for Jews and Greeks alike—the necessity of repenting from sin and turning to God, and of having faith in our Lord Jesus. “And now I am bound by the Spirit to go to Jerusalem. I don’t know what awaits me, except that the Holy Spirit tells me in city after city that jail and suffering lie ahead. But my life is worth nothing to me unless I use it for finishing the work assigned me by the Lord Jesus—the work of telling others the Good News about the wonderful grace of God.” Acts 20:20-24 NLT

## lectio // Acts 20:17-38

I wanted to include verse 20 because Paul writes, “either publicly or in your homes.” NOTHING is more effective than being in each other’s homes. Public, meeting spaces, buildings and even churches are not the same as in someone’s home. Paul was in both, as we should be in both. We have to get back to hospitality in our homes! Luke writes about this powerful moment of clear calling and purpose that takes precedence over everything else in Paul’s life. Mostly, the tight bond that ministry and mission provides. Paul knows suffering lies ahead. He knows death awaits him. But that does not dissuade him from his calling. Most of us spend much of our life finding our purpose. It is not an easy pursuit. Mostly, because we have to wade or wallow through all the things we are told that we are to pursue. Like life, liberty and the pursuit of... happiness. For the Christ follower, those are extremely hard to avoid thinking about in our USA mindset. The gospel calls us to pick up a cross and follow Jesus even to death. Of course, in our situation we would like BOTH - happiness and purpose! Oftentimes they are at odds with each other. So, it takes a little longer for some and for others NEVER “finding” that life mission. Of course, family and health, reputation and good planning play a role in our purpose. But, there is always that question of, “what will it cost?” Can we truly find life - full and extraordinary life following the Lord Jesus Christ? God seems to think we can. Paul was definitely an outlier, but still goes to show the power of a purpose driven life and the results of being used by God - even among huge obstacles and adversities. I’d like to finish my work here in earth well. I’d love to hear the words, “well done, son” at the end of my journey. How about you?

## oratio

Dad,

A few times I felt like I was “off-track” in both finding and pursuing my purpose for being here on this spinning globe and and the wispy smoke of existence. Then, other times, I felt like I was IN IT, the flow, the ease of confidence and excitement. For a number of years, I felt that I truly found my track, my calling, only to find it gone in a matter of a few years. It turns out it is NOT found in some organizational vision or mantra. It’s knowing who I am, what I do well and knowing you and your voice leading and guiding me onward to the high calling of your purposes and plans.

## contemplatio

rest in the presence of God, allowing the words revealed to take root