

UPCOMING EVENTS

All events are at the church unless otherwise indicated.

June

- GriefShare – Sundays 6/25 4-6pm

July

- Benevolent/Communion Sunday – 7/2
- GriefShare – Sundays 7/2, 7/9, 7/16, 7/23, 7/30 4-6pm
- Park Play Dates – Wednesdays 7/5, 7/19 11-12:30pm
- Truthseeker Mission Team mtg – Thursday 7/13 7pm
- Truthseeker Mission Trip – 7/16-7/22
- Care Giver Support – Thursday 7/20 6pm at Casa Maria Restaurant
- Pastor Dave's Retirement Party – Sunday 7/30 after church service

Recommended Reading: *Revealing the Mysteries of Heaven*, by David Jeremiah. Will we play harps in heaven? Reside on clouds? Know each other? Be bored? See children? These and many other questions are addressed in this book by Dr. Jeremiah which seeks biblical answers to the many mysteries of heaven about which we would like to inquire further. This book overlaps somewhat with Randy Alcorn's book on heaven, but also covers additional ground.

Resource Baby Bottle Campaign: If you haven't already, please return your baby bottles in the lobby.

New Website: Please check out our new website which is now live! It is still a work in progress, but hopefully you will find what you are looking for and also find it easy to navigate. The live stream of the service should now be accessible on our website, mobile app, and TV app, such as Roku or AppleTV. Find us at www.eatoncc.org.

Summer Park Play Days: Pack a sack lunch, bring your lawn chairs and picnic blankets, and come play with other Moms and kids at the church playground from 11-12:30 on the first and third Wednesdays of each month this summer. Park Play Days are 7/5, and 7/19.

Thank You: We wanted to thank all of you who volunteered with our 2nd Annual Block Party! From setting up, clean up, serving food, emptying trash, cooking, talking with all the people who attended; we truly couldn't have done it without you. Because of your help, we had another success year!

Retirement Party: The Deaconesses are asking for a bit of help with food for Pastor Dave and Patty's Retirement Celebration (to be held on July 30). There will be sign-up sheets at the information desk if you are interested.

EATON COMMUNITY CHURCH WELCOMES YOU!

JUNE 25, 2023

Prelude Don Reasoner

Welcome & Announcements Pastor Scott

Mission Moment Andrew Elliott, Frontier School of the Bible

Memory Verse **Proverbs 15:1** – “A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.”

Scripture Reading Acts 20:22-27 Pastor Scott

Worship in Prayer

Call to Worship Psalm 67:4

Worship in Song:

- “I Thank God”
- “Faithful And True”
- “I Am His And He Is Mine”
- “Is He Worthy”

Children Dismissed (1st grade and under)

Worship in the Word Pastor Dave
“Defeating the Flesh”

Worship in Song “Spirit Of The Living God, Fall Fresh On Me”

Benediction Pastor Dave



CONTRIBUTIONS BUDGET FOR 2023

\$598,780

	Year-To-Date		Weekly
Budget:	\$278,200	Budget:	\$11,128
Actual:	\$264,801	Actual:	\$6,953
Difference:	\$13,399	Difference:	\$4,175

WORSHIP ATTENDANCE: 245

Staff

Senior Pastor.....	Dave McNeff
Pastor of Adult Ministry.....	Scott Wilson
Director of Children's and Youth Ministry.....	Karla Bowness
Administrative Assistant.....	Kirby Lawhead
Director of Music.....	Don Reasoner

DEFEATING THE FLESH

(Acts 20:22-27)

Date: _____

I. Paul _____ to the Spirit's Leading

II. Paul _____ Life Correctly

III. Paul _____ His Mission Faithfully

IV. Paul _____ to a Clear Conscience

Other Scripture Cited: Rom 7:15-19; Gal 5:16-17; Acts 21:4; 21:10-12; 9:15-16 Gen 17:17-18; 22:1-2; Heb 11:19; Phil 1:21; Ezek 33:7-9; Jer 2:13

Sermons available on Video, Audio and notes at eatoncc.org

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DEFEATING THE FLESH

(Acts 20:22-27)

June 25, 2023

Read Acts 20:22-27 – In Paul’s instructions to the Ephesian elders, he touches on his past, his present and his future. In the past he faithfully ministered the gospel to them. Presently he is driven to go to Jerusalem -- not an easy decision. Why? Bc ²³ “the HS testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me.” That’s amazing! If affliction awaits – why go? Why not stay on the gospel trail? Why venture into the teeth of the storm? Well, Paul tells us why. ²² “I am going to Jer, constrained by the Spirit?” He’s driven to go where the HS leads! Jerusalem!

Hard decision. Paul had the same battle with obedience we do. He tells us so. **Rom 7: 15** For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. . . . ¹⁹ For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.” Sound familiar? It’s the age-old struggle of every believer. So how do we win? **Gal 5: 16** But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.” Paul had to decide like we do, every day: Will we walk in the Spirit, or in the flesh? The war rages all our lives. Flesh vs. Spirit. And by our choices, we decide who wins.

How did Paul get it right? What motivated him to walk in the Spirit? Here are 4 truths which will be of immeasurable help to us in our own walk.

V. Paul Acceded to the Spirit’s Leading

²² And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there, ²³ except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me.” Now, why would Paul continue to Jerusalem when he is being warned everywhere he’s walking into a firestorm – which he does. In Jer, he is falsely accused of taking a Gentile into the Jewish section of the temple and gets imprisoned 5 years. He was warned. When he got to Tyre, **Acts 21:4:** “And having sought out the disciples, we stayed there for 7 days. And thru the spirit they were telling Paul not to go on to Jerusalem.” Same message in Caesarea: **Acts 21:**¹⁰ While we were staying for many days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. ¹¹ And coming to us, he took Paul’s belt and bound his own feet and hands and said, “Thus says the Holy Spirit, ‘This is how the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.’ ” ¹² When we heard this, we and the people there urged him not to go up to Jerusalem.”

So was Paul wrong to go to Jer? I think not. Why? Agabus said he would be “bound” hand and feet.” Guess what? Same word (δέω) is back in **20:22** where Paul is “constrained by the Spirit” to go. In **Acts 12:6** Peter was in jail, “bound with two chains.” Paul feels that same constraint by the Spirit pulling him towards Jer. Thru prayer and study, Paul has a strong sense of the Spirit’s leading him. At the same time, the Spirit is prompting these dire warnings in every city. So what gives? Why this push/pull from the HS?

It’s a test! Life gets easier once we realize God builds us thru the tests of circumstances. Even Jesus went thru that often, most explicitly in the Garden of Gethsemane. Paul was no exception. The Spirit is saying, “You must go, Paul. It’s not going to be easy, so prepare yourself, but here is the way I want you to go. Will you be faithful?” And Paul was.

The day after his conversion a disciple named Ananias was told: **Acts 9:15-16:** “Go [to Paul], for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. ¹⁶ For *I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.*” Persecution was Paul’s constant companion. Now, more is coming. Paul was ready. *He would not allow the Spirit’s warnings to overcome the Spirit’s leading.*

God told Abe at age 75, “Your descendants will be like the sand of the sea.” Ten years later, *not one kid.* So, he took matters into his own hands, had a boy by his wife’s maid. *Assumed he had God’s promise.* Fifteen years later, God renews the promise. **Gen 17:** ¹⁷ Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed and said to himself, “Shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?” ¹⁸ And Abraham said to God, “*Oh that Ishmael might live before you!*” “*Lord, don’t sweat it. I’ve got it covered. Ishmael is the perfect answer.*” But he wasn’t. Isaac was. A year later – promise impossibly fulfilled.

But then **Gen 22:1-2:** After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, “Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” ² He said, “Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.” “*But wait, God. This is the child of promise. If he’s gone, the promise is gone. I’m getting mixed messages here!*” But he went, not knowing what would happen. He trusted: **Heb 11:19:** “He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead.” And we know how God stayed his hand at the last minute and provided a ram for sacrifice. Growing thru tested faith.

How about us? Can we trust God in the dark? I think of Losey’s. At our first visit I asked, “*How do you do this knowing you could be killed? What do you tell your kids?*” He said, “*We tell them this is the normal Xn life. This is what trusting God is all about. And if God should take us, He will take care of you.*” That’s trusting God in the dark, when nothing’s going as it should. When we follow the Spirit like that – it kills the flesh.

VI. Paul Assessed Life Correctly

You’ll not defeat the flesh if you only think of NOW! Is it important? Sure! It deserves to be enjoyed. But is it ultimate? No. BUT the flesh will insist it is. Paul wouldn’t go there. He followed the Spirit by correctly assessing the value of this life vs. the life to come. ²⁴ But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself.” Paul wanted to live. But he knew what we often forget. Living isn’t the most important thing. Obeying God is.

Phil 1:21: “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” The flesh says, “*Staying alive is everything.*” Paul says, “*To live is great; to die is even greater; it’s a gain, bc I’ll be with Christ.*” That’s a rare, but Godly perspective. It let Paul know while he might face suffering in Jerusalem, he could not face the loss of anything eternally important. He could not lose.

James Calvert, in the 1830’s went to minister to the cannibals in Fiji. The ship captain tried to dissuade him. “*You and your family will be killed if you go among such savages.*” Calvert replied, “*We died before we came.*” To be dead to self and alive to Chris is to be absolutely untouchable by this life. Karl Marx said to be a Communist is to be “*a dead man on reprieve.*” But he offered nothing beyond the grave. Better to be a dead person on reprieve to a Savior who can take you all the way eternally home!

The flesh always tells us the values of this life far outweigh those of a vague eternity. It's a lie. To defeat the flesh we must have God's perspective, like Paul or James Calvert or our Lord – one that is willing to suffer loss of face, loss of a job, loss of relationships, whatever for the greater worth of gaining Christ. *“It will be worth it all / when we see Jesus. / All troubles seem so small / when we see Him. / One glimpse of his dear face, / all sorrow will erase. / So bravely run the race / till we see Christ.”* The more we see Him thru His Word, the more able we'll discern the lies of the flesh.

VII. Paul Attended His Mission Faithfully

He had a mission, and it wasn't political action, career advancement, social justice, entertainment or sports. Paul loved sports. He illustrated with boxing, running, gymnastics. But *those things would not follow him into eternity*. What would? ²⁴ *But 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.* His mission to spread the gospel. Keeping that at the top of the list in his life kept him focused on what's most important in life. The flesh will never point you there; the Spirit will always point you there.

We're not all pastors or missionaries. But we are all to use our gifts of faith, giving, helps, administration, counseling, music, and loving people to produce eternal fruit. Knowing our mission keeps us Spirit-focused, not flesh-focused. While he enjoyed sports and friendships and travel, Paul wanted most of all to *“testify to the gospel of the grace of God”* and *“proclaim the kingdom”*. He knew a day of accounting was coming soon.

Knowing your mission focuses your mind. Someone once asked, *“How can you tell the preacher's about to give a short sermon?”* Ans: *“He has his golf shoes on.”* Please take note – no golf shoes. Nothing wrong with golf. But to shortchange the gospel and life's mission for an extra round – that would be a problem. Life is meant to be enjoyed, Beloved. But to make sure we don't waste it on trivialities we must stay focused on our life's mission. If we do, some good, but unnecessary things will fall away, as will some things that are trivialities or even sinful. So, prioritize mission first.

VIII. Paul Aspired to a Clear Conscience

Paul says, *“I'm not going to see you again. This is it. But I can say in good conscience: ²⁶Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all, ²⁷⁾ for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.”* Paul might have had **Ezek 33:7-9** in mind: *“So you, son of man, I have made a watchman for the house of Israel. Whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. ⁸ If I say to the wicked, O wicked one, you shall surely die, and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from his way, that wicked person shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. ⁹ But if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, that person shall die in his iniquity, but you will have delivered your soul.”*

Now we're not Ezekiel, and we're not Paul, but the principle holds. God was telling Ezekiel, *“You're a watchman, warning of danger. If you fall asleep or otherwise fail to warn people of approaching danger, and they are killed, their blood is on your hands.”* Share truth with people.

Paul wanted no innocent blood on his hands. We must not either. We have a hard message. People don't want to hear it. They don't know they have spiritual cancer. But we must ask the

Spirit of God to show us creative and compassionate ways to help them see by His power. When we're focused on arriving before our judge with a clear conscience, it will keep the flesh at bay. It is the flesh, our old selfish nature, that holds us back, is it not?

A few years ago, some lifeguards had a party to celebrate no drownings that summer. A hundred lifeguards attended. But as the party was breaking up, 4 of the men, clearing the pool area, noticed a fully dressed man in the deep end. They tried to revive Jess Moody, 31, but it was too late. *He drowned surrounded by lifeguards celebrating their success*. Could that be us? So caught up in our own little group of believers that we never reach beyond them? You can be living in the flesh right in the middle of the church, right? But let's not. Let's find ways to reach out and to share the gospel of JC. What people do with it is up to them. Sharing it – that's up to us.

Conc – We often think of the flesh as some big sin – dissensions, envy, drunkenness, loss of temper, sexual immorality. And indeed those are listed in **Gal 5** among others. But sometimes, the most fleshly things in our lives are the distractions, innocent in themselves, that have taken up priority residence – keeping us from our God-given mission, whatever form that takes. It doesn't take much, does it, to keep us from walking in the Spirit.

God says in **Jer 2:13**: “For my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water.” So easy to do. *Quit God and take up trivialities*. But it all comes with an eternal price.

As the Communists began to overrun China, one missionary with CIM wrote this poem: “*Tonight Shanghai is burning / And I am dying too. / But there's no death more certain / That death inside of you. / Some men die of shrapnel / While some go down in flames. / But most men died inch by inch / While playing little games.*” That need not be us if we will tune ourselves to accede to the Spirit's leading, assess the value of life correctly, attend to our mission, and aspire to a clear conscience. That will keep us pointed in the right direction, allowing us to enjoy now while preparing for then. Let's pray.