

Living A Life Worth Remembering  
Acts 20:20-24

George Eastman was born in Waterville, New York. He grew up in the 10-acre family farm which his parents had bought in 1849. He had two older sisters, Ellen Maria and Katie. He was largely self-educated. His father died of a brain disorder when George was 8 years old. His mother took in boarders to survive and afford George's schooling. His sister Katie contracted polio when George was 15 years old. George left school and started working to help support the family. His biggest regret was there were no family photographs. They are common in our day. Photographs were rare in the mid 1800's. The bulky equipment and dangerous chemicals required expert users. As a result, the average person would "have their picture made" only once or twice during their entire lifetime. Eastman was determined to "to make the camera as convenient as the pencil." After a decade of experiments he introduced the Brownie, a simple snapshot camera preloaded with film and the slogan "You push the button, we do the rest" making amateur photography accessible to the general public for the first time. Virtually overnight, Eastman's camera transformed the way the world captured and memorialized life. The "Kodak Moment" was born. For the next ninety years, Kodak and its film dominated the photography market, commanding a 90 percent share. He had a vision for his life that was driven by a desire to provide a better life for us all.

Someone recently asked a question in a survey "If money were no object to you, what would you do with the rest of your life?" You'd expect people to say things like, "You know, I would help inner city kids. I would devote my life to building orphanages," or "I would help dig water wells in Africa."

Instead, here's what almost everyone said, "If money was no object, I'd buy a bigger house," or "I'd get a boat," or "I'd want to be famous." "I'd travel all over the world and take exotic vacations."

Do you really think that God so loved the world that he sent his one and only son, Jesus, who shed his blood, died and rose again, so our greatest dream in life could be to go on vacation?

But those aren't visions or big ideas for a life. They're substitutes for the real thing. They're glittery placeholders. They're excuses to allow us to continue to drift.

Do you really think that's what God has for us? That it would be for us to live a self-centered, consumeristic dream for our lives?

Jeremiah 29:11 reassures us of God's unwavering commitment to our lives. "*For I know the plans I have for you,*" declares the LORD, "*plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.*" Just as God had a plan for the exiled Israelites, He also has a purpose for each of us. Embrace the promise that God desires a future filled with hope, and His divine plans for us are for good, not harm.

To discover God's purpose, we must actively seek His will through prayer, meditation, and studying His Word. Jeremiah 29:12-13 emphasizes the importance of seeking God with all our hearts. "*Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.*"

As we draw closer to Him, aligning our desires with His purpose, and allowing His guidance to illuminate our path we catch a glimpse of the unique vision God has for our lives and then take steps to live it out.

Solomon wrote, "*Where there is no vision, the people perish...*" Proverbs 29:18

The Hebrew word that is translated as "vision" is the word "chazown (khaw-zone)." The Hebrew word "chazown" means "a dream, a revelation, or a vision."

Where there is no “chazown,” no vision, for a Godly family, half of the marriages end up in divorce. Where there is no vision for financial freedom, even in a very wealthy part of the world, you can still live paycheck to paycheck, always worried about money.

Where there is no vision for a Godly body, a body that's healthy and would honor God, you can live in a very good part of the world and still be out of shape and unhealthy.

Where there is no vision for a great ministry or to make a lasting difference, you can stumble through life always hoping for something better, knowing that God has something out there for you, but always living dissatisfied and under God's potential for your life. Where there is no vision, no chazown, the people perish.

The good news is that you can wake up every day knowing what you were created to do. God did not put you here by accident. You were created by God and placed at this moment in history because this is the time you can best bring glory to Him.

Where there is no chazown, no vision; people stumble through life making it up as they go along.

In Acts 20, Paul was ministering in Ephesus. This was one of the churches that he had started. He loved the people, he loved the ministry, but God started to stir within him, and he realized God was calling him to something new and something different. With tremendous sorrow, he gathered the elders together, and said, “

God was showing Paul something bigger. He had more for Paul. Paul had to say goodbye to where he was, leave his comfort zone, and take a step of faith into a place that's not totally known in order to go where God wants him to go.

### **1. Live With Clarity and Not A Casual Drift.**

*“You know how I lived the whole time I was with you, from the first day I came into the province of Asia. I served the Lord with great humility and with tears and in the midst of severe testing by the plots of my Jewish opponents. You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house.” Acts 20:18-20*

Paul lived a life of purpose. He was following God's plan. To have clarity you have to answer some important questions about your life:

What did my life add up to?

Did I really matter?

What did I live for?

Who will remember me?

What will they say about me when I'm gone?

Why was it important that I existed?

If you could attend your own funeral what would people say?

Many people are going through life without a vision, a big idea, a plan for their lives. For the most part, people just stumble halfheartedly through life hoping tomorrow will be better than today. No plan. No dream. Mostly just existing. Hoping for a break. They just keep turning the pages of their life story, one after the other, until they get to the final chapter.

Everyone ends up somewhere, but few people end up somewhere on purpose.

If you would like to end up one day financially free, where you don't owe anybody anything, you are totally debt free, and you can give generously whenever God calls you have to have a financial plan.

If you want to end up in great physical shape one day you are going to need a workout plan.

We would love to end up so close to God that we know we are pleasing Him in all we do. You want to one day hear him say to you, *“Well done, my good and faithful servant.”* Matthew 25:21

You can end up at those places, but you will not end up there by accident. You will not stumble upon success.

## **2. Choose God’s Call Over Comfort.**

*“And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there.”* Acts 20:22

You are going to have to leave the comfort of the known and take the step of faith into the unknown.

- The Spirit's Prompting

*“And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem.”* Acts 20:22

Paul was saying this wasn't his idea, this was the Holy Spirit's idea. We all have an idea for our life, but God has a bigger and better idea.

The phrase that's translated, “compelled by the Spirit” is the phrase, “deo pneuma.” “Deo” is the Greek word that is translated “compelled, bound, or wrapped with cords.”

“Pneuma” is the word that is translated “Spirit, current of air, breeze of the Spirit.”

I pray you have a “Deo pneuma” moment where you are wrapped up by the Spirit, where the Spirit of God just moves you, pulls you, tugs on you. Where you see something and you think, “That can't be, that shouldn't be, I could do something about that. I wish it wasn't, there's something moving me out of my comfort zone, into the step of faith to do something more.”

Does anyone know what it feels like when you are being pulled toward something?

God doesn't always give us the details because we can't handle the details. If you knew all of the details, you might say no to His assignment. You have to take a step out into uncertainty and walk by faith.

*“Without faith it's impossible to please God.”* Hebrews 11:6

All I know is God's calling me to do this but I don't know what's going to happen next. It's the “deo pneuma” followed by the moment of uncertainty.

God has given me a “deo pneuma,” a vision, a compelling towards something. Once we determine that next step, then step-by-step, we are going to move towards the vision.

Many of you have the vision, but you haven't taken the first step. You won't be able to see step five because God says, “You can't comprehend step five until you take steps one, two, three and four.”

God will give you Chazown, vision, a passion, a deo pneuma, the Spirit's prompting, the certain uncertainty, I know I'm supposed to, but I don't quite know how.

Always believe God knows the plan, but He will not give you every detail because you can't handle all the details.

If you knew all of the details, you may say no to His assignment.

- Predictable Resistance.

Your spiritual enemy is going to try to talk you out of it or do something to throw you off course.

“I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that blessings and pleasures are to come....”

No, no, no that's not what it says! I messed that up, didn't I?

*“I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me.” Acts 20:23*

There is an enemy that's going to try to stop you from doing what God uniquely created and called you to do. You can see it in every great story in the Bible.

Moses is called by God to lead his people out of bondage and into freedom. Pharaoh and his own people were predictable resistance.

Joseph had a vision to be a great leader, but his brothers said, “We like your coat, we don't like you. We are throwing you into this pit and selling you into slavery.” Vision and resistance.

Nehemiah had a burden to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Sanballat and Tobiah, were the predictable resistance.

When you hear from God and take a step of faith, the enemy is going to oppose you.

You get a vision to have a Godly marriage and commit to pray together. You start praying, and suddenly there is conflict. You took a step in the right direction, and there's predictable resistance.

You want to get financially free, so you take a step toward it. Something is going to break by Friday, something expensive, because that's how it happens with predictable resistance.

You get a vision to get in great shape. You go to the grocery store to buy fruit, and Twinkies will be on sale for 75% off! You can just know it because there will be the predictable resistance. You have to press through that.

God is going to stir in you today, and you are going to step into uncertainty, and something is going to cause you to pause. Press through it.

What is your next step?

For many of you, it is time. You want to serve, but there will be predictable resistance and you'll say, “I don't have time.” You will have to press through whatever the resistance is.

### **3. A Commitment To Not Give Up.**

*“However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace.” Acts 20:24*

Paul was saying there is nothing else that matters more than this: "If only I may finish the race and complete the task." Paul says I have a "*deo pneuma*" a vision of why I exist. This is my "chazown." This is my dream, my revelation, my vision. This is my somewhere on purpose.

I pray to God that, if you haven't experienced the power of chazown, that you will. Because when you have the clarity, This is what I was created to do, you can endure the pain. You can overcome the temptation. You wake up daily with focus, passion and divine drive because you know why you are here. You are not an accident. You have been put here by God to do something.

I am created by God to pastor the local church to lead people to become fully devoted followers of Christ. I am doing precisely what God put me on earth to do. If I died tomorrow, I can die knowing I am doing what God called me to do!

*"I consider my life worth nothing."* Acts 20:24

When you get to that point, you'll be like Nehemiah in the Old Testament. He had the vision, the walls were down in Jerusalem but he's convinced somebody's got to do something about this! He cried, he got down on his face, he spent days fasting and praying and God said, "Your burden, is your assignment."

He starts building the wall, and in just a few days, everyone else says that it's totally impossible, and he can never ever do it. The resistance comes. Sanballat sends a messenger to Nehemiah saying, "*Come, let us meet together in one of the villages on the plain of Ono.*" Nehemiah 6:2

I find the name of the city fascinating. The enemy always has an Oh-No offer for us. He will offer you comfort, pleasure, fame, relaxation. You can't say yes to the "Oh-No" moment in your life.

Here is his reply, "*So I sent messengers to them with this reply: "I am carrying on a great project and cannot go down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and go down to you?" Four times they sent me the same message, and each time I gave them the same answer.*" Nehemiah 6:3

I am doing what I was created by God to do. I am doing a great work. You can't tempt me with any kind of offer. You've got a job for me making more money? I can't be bought. You've got something that's going to provide me more comfort? I am not living for comfort. You've got something that's going to make me more popular? My audience is not you. I'm living for an audience of the One True God. Nehemiah knew why he was created. You were created by God in heaven, placed at this moment in history for a purpose.

I consider my life worth nothing to me. If only I can build this wall. If only I can tell people about Christ. If only I can heal my marriage and have a Godly marriage and raise generations of Christ followers. If only I can have this business take off so I can fund my local church or build orphanages around the world. If only I can get to the place where I can disciple young girls so that they don't get pregnant before they are married and end up ruining their life. If only I can get into the inner city, I tell you I can love those kids out of their darkness into a place where they can know Christ the way I do. If only I could mentor young teenage boys who feel called to ministry.

Sir Francis Drake prayed this:

"Disturb us, Lord, when  
We are too well pleased with ourselves,  
When our dreams have come true  
Because we have dreamed too little,  
When we arrived safely  
Because we sailed too close to the shore."

Sir Francis Drake

Disturb us Lord, when we've dreamed too little. When we've ended up somewhere, but not somewhere on purpose.

You know that you were created for more. You are not just a paycheck. You are not just paying a mortgage. You are not just trying to get your kids from here to there. You are not just trying to graduate college.

There is a divine purpose, but you are not quite sure what it is. Maybe you have sensed it, but you haven't had the courage to take the next step. If you really believe deep down there is a divine reason for you being here and you want to be able to say like Paul, "I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may."

Do you have that desire? Do you really want to know what it is? Do you say, "I want to live it. I want to see it. I want to experience it. I want Chazown."

Our greatest vision is not a nicer house or a more comfortable life, but a life that would please and honor God.

You don't end up somewhere in life by accident or get to go to heaven by accident either. You have to decide. You have to choose. God was intentional. He chose to send His Son Jesus. Jesus was intentional and chose to die for our sins.