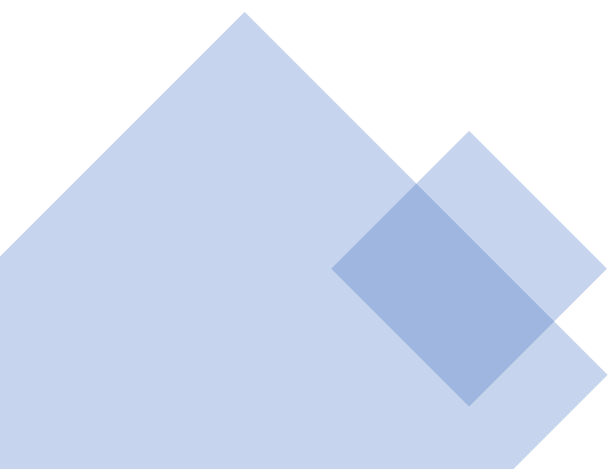
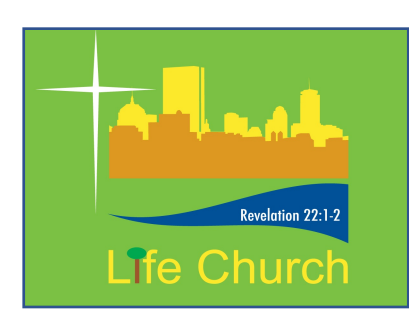




The Whole Will of God Part 1

Acts 20





The Key Passage: Acts Chapter 20: 1 – 9 (NIV)

20 When the uproar had ended, Paul sent for the disciples and, after encouraging them, said goodbye and set out for Macedonia. ² He traveled through that area, speaking many words of encouragement to the people, and finally arrived in Greece, ³ where he stayed three months. Because some Jews had plotted against him just as he was about to sail for Syria, he decided to go back through Macedonia. ⁴ He was accompanied by Sopater son of Pyrrhus from Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, Gaius from Derbe, Timothy also, and Tychicus and Trophimus from the province of Asia. ⁵ These men went on ahead and waited for us at Troas. ⁶ But we sailed from Philippi after the Festival of Unleavened Bread, and five days later joined the others at Troas, where we stayed seven days.

Eutychus Raised From the Dead at Troas

⁷ On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight. ⁸ There were many lamps in the upstairs room where we were meeting. ⁹ Seated in a window was a young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep as Paul talked on and on. When he was sound asleep, he fell to the ground from the third story and was picked up dead.



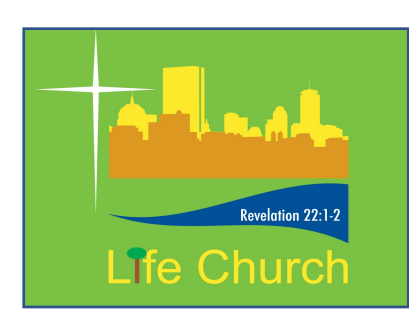
The Key Passage: Acts Chapter 20: 10 – 18 (NIV)

¹⁰ Paul went down, threw himself on the young man and put his arms around him. “Don’t be alarmed,” he said. “He’s alive!” ¹¹ Then he went upstairs again and broke bread and ate. After talking until daylight, he left. ¹² The people took the young man home alive and were greatly comforted.

Paul’s Farewell to the Ephesian Elders

¹³ We went on ahead to the ship and sailed for Assos, where we were going to take Paul aboard. He had made this arrangement because he was going there on foot. ¹⁴ When he met us at Assos, we took him aboard and went on to Mitylene. ¹⁵ The next day we set sail from there and arrived off Chios. The day after that we crossed over to Samos, and on the following day arrived at Miletus. ¹⁶ Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus to avoid spending time in the province of Asia, for he was in a hurry to reach Jerusalem, if possible, by the day of Pentecost.

¹⁷ From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church. ¹⁸ When they arrived, he said to them: “You know how I lived the whole time I was with you, from the first day I came into the province of Asia.

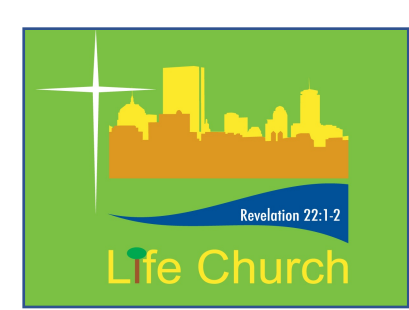


The Key Passage: Acts Chapter 20:19 – 27 (NIV)

¹⁹ I served the Lord with great humility and with tears and in the midst of severe testing by the plots of my Jewish opponents. ²⁰ 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. ²¹ I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.

²² “And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. ²³ I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. ²⁴ 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.

²⁵ “Now I know that none of you among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom will ever see me again. ²⁶ Therefore, I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of any of you. ²⁷ For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God.



The Key Passage: Acts Chapter 20: 28-38 (NIV)

²⁸ Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God,^[a] which he bought with his own blood.^[b] ²⁹ I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. ³⁰ Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. ³¹ So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.

³² “Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. ³³ I have not coveted anyone’s silver or gold or clothing. ³⁴ You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions. ³⁵ In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’ ”

³⁶ When Paul had finished speaking, he knelt down with all of them and prayed. ³⁷ They all wept as they embraced him and kissed him. ³⁸ What grieved them most was his statement that they would never see his face again. Then they accompanied him to the ship.



Encouragement:

There's a greater power with us! The Lord is with us to fight our battles!

2 Chronicles 32: ⁶ He appointed military officers over the people and assembled them before him in the square at the city gate and encouraged them with these words: ⁷ “Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged because of the king of Assyria and the vast army with him, for there is a greater power with us than with him. ⁸ With him is only the arm of flesh, but with us is the LORD our God to help us and to fight our battles.” And the people gained confidence from what Hezekiah the king of Judah said.



Encouragement:

The Lord
disciplines the
one he loves.

- Hebrews 12:5-7 New International Version
- ⁵ And have you completely forgotten this word of encouragement that addresses you as a father addresses his son? It says,
- “My son, do not make light of the Lord’s discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, ⁶ because the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son.”[\[a\]](#)
- ⁷ Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father?



Encouragement:

You are not in this alone. We can build one another up.

- Hebrews 10:24-25 New International Version
- ²⁴ And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, ²⁵ not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.
- 1 Thessalonians 5:10-12
- New International Version
- ¹⁰ He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. ¹¹ Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.
-



Encouragement:

Christ is coming
back and we'll
be with Him!

- 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18 New International Version
- ¹⁵ According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. ¹⁸ Therefore encourage one another with these words



Acts 20:27

27 For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God.

In about 3 – 3 1/2 years, Paul developed disciples, mature believers through teaching and modeling.

- **Life Church Discipleship Components: The Seven “F”s**
- **Focus On the Message**
- Begin by focusing on Jesus’ message and the Bible’s unified story that leads to him.
- **Family Up**
- Develop the understanding and discipline you will need to be an effective part of Jesus’ family.
- **Flow in the Spirit**
- Jesus is present in his church through his Spirit. Learn how to be led by the Holy Spirit in every area of your life.
- **Face Your Problems**
- In Christ you can face your problems and overcome them!
- **Farm Your Land**
- Learn how to function fruitfully wherever God has placed you.
- **Find Your Purpose**
- Discover the ways that God wants to use you.
- **Fulfill Your Mission**
- Accomplish the things that God want to do through you.



God's original purpose for humankind is still valid.

- Genesis 1:26-28 New International Version
- ²⁶ Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals,^[a] and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”
- ²⁷ So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.
- ²⁸ God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”
- Genesis 2:15 New International Version
- ¹⁵ The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.
- Isaiah 43:7 New International Version
- ⁷ everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.”

Focus On the Message

Begin by focusing on Jesus' message and the Bible's unified story that leads to him.



Focus On the Message

Begin by focusing on Jesus' message and the Bible's unified story that leads to him.

• I want to be like Christ

- . Philippians 3:10-11 New International Version
- ¹⁰ I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹ and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.
- Matthew 28:18-20 New International Version

I want to help others follow Christ.

Matthew 28:18-20

- ¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

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Inspiration and Opportunity

- Attended a play this weekend. The setting of the play was East St. Louis, where I lived decades ago.
- Over the years, East St. Louis, IL has been described as a “war zone”, and the most troubled city in the United States. Topping FBI’s list of 100 most dangerous.
- The experience of living in East St. Louis and then in the prospering town of Belleville, inspired my interest in community development.
- What needs most concern you and inspire you to action?
- There is joy in doing work that the Lord has called us to, that we love and that benefits others and in balancing work, rest, exercise, healthy eating; although there may be hardship.
- Paul said in Acts 20:24 ²⁴ 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.



Sharing

- God created all of humankind to reflect his glory in the earth and God gave each of us skills and gifts.
- Reflect on the skills and gifts that God has given you and how they are or can be a blessing to others and our world.
- Discuss what you are putting into practice in your life to become more like Christ.
- God wants everyone to follow Jesus and put his Kingdom first.
- Use the prayer tool to identify people in your sphere of influence that you can pray for and help along the journey to following Christ.

