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**BLUEPRINTS: Built to Last: Leaving A Lasting Legacy<sup>1</sup>**  
**Acts 20:17-38**

**WELCOME:**

Good morning, Trinity! I have some friends on stage with me this morning. In just a moment we are going to celebrate Family Dedication. But let me first say a word of welcome to you to Trinity Baptist Church this morning. My name is Chris Wigley, and I am the Lead Pastor here and we are so glad you are here this morning.

For those of you that are guests, we are especially grateful you have joined us today. We would love to connect with you if this is your first time. You can help us do that by texting the keyword TBCMP, that stands for Trinity Baptist Church Mt. Pleasant, to the number 94-000. Or you can stop by Guest Connect located in the lobby area as we have a team that is excited to meet you and they want to put a gift in your hands as a way to say thanks for joining us today.

We are all about becoming a gospel-centered community redeeming brokenness through hope in Jesus Christ. That is what we are about. And one of the things that we look forward to twice a year, that is a part of that vision, is Family Dedication. This is a special time where families dedicate themselves and their kids to God's ways. And it is a time where our church family can dedicate themselves to praying for and supporting these parents.

So, I want to introduce our incredible Preschool Minister, Candye Dorsey. Aren't you grateful for Candye and all she does? Candye, would you introduce all these families to us this morning?

**FAMILY INTRODUCTIONS:**

9:30am – Matt and Anna Craig – Jase and Jesse; Lane and Amber Davis – Ryleigh; Cody and Emily Morris – Jonah; Chandler and Shay Smith – Bennett; Carl and Amber Welch – Elsie

11:00am – Crystal Cassio – Penelope, Eli and Karsen; Jesus and Morgan Cristan – Genesis and Gianna; Blake and Emma Knight – Westlyn; Heather Moreno – Rajah, Rayah; Dalton and Nicole O'Neal – Braylynn, Lilly, Hazel; Lonnie and Karah Pilgrim – Allie Kate.

**FAMILY DEDICATION:**

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Thank you, Candye! Can we give these families a round of applause?

Way to go, families! We are so proud of each of you. I know I speak on behalf of our church family that we are grateful to see parents like you make commits to raise their kids in the fear and admonition of the Lord. So, it is an honor and a privilege, today, to come around you as a church family for a special time.

You know, one of the gifts God gives us, outside of Jesus Himself, is our family. And the biblical view of children is that they are a blessing to us, not an inconvenience. But while having kids is a blessing, it is also a responsibility. Scripture challenges parents to be the primary spiritual educators of the home and God entrusts us as parents to raise our children in The Lord. In fact, God's way of passing faith to future generations is through families.

Family dedication follows a long line of Biblical tradition. In 1 Samuel, a young mother, by the name of Hannah, dedicated her son, Samuel, to The Lord. She says in a prayer in 1 Samuel, *"I prayed for this child and The Lord granted me what I asked. Therefore, I give him to The Lord. For his whole life, he will be given to The Lord."* Isn't that an awesome prayer? That's the Old Testament.

We also see an example of Family Dedication in the New Testament when Joseph and Mary presented Jesus in the temple as a baby. The Bible says they went to the temple to dedicate Jesus to God. So, that's what you are doing today. You are joining a long line of faithful parents that dedicated their children back to God.

But church family, it is important to note that in both examples I mentioned that The Church is very much so involved. Samuel's and Jesus' presentation took place in the temple. So, this celebration isn't just a commitment made by these parents. The reason they stand here today, before the Lord and His Church, is because we are also making a commitment today. We are committing to join them by prayerfully supporting them, loving them and serving them. Family dedication is a two-way celebration and commitment.

So, I want to lead us in a couple of public commitments this morning. First by these parents and by our church family. I'll prompt you for your reply.

Parents, do you commit to put the health of your marriage before the raising of your children, with the understanding that a strong family begins with a healthy

marriage? And do you further commit to model the life of a follower of Jesus, understanding this will be the most powerful witness your children will receive? And do you further commit to raise your child within the encouraging community of the local church to instill the values of biblical community found only in the body of Christ? And do you finally commit to pray for your children without ceasing, that they would one day being a personal relationship with Jesus and grow as His disciple? If this represents the desire of your heart, respond with “We will.” Awesome. We love you guys!

And now church family, your turn. Congregation, do you commit to pray the children of Trinity as The Lord leads, that they would know the loving guidance of Jesus from the earliest possible age? Do you further commit to be an encourager and supporter of the next generation? And do you finally commit to be the gospel-centered community that these families need through the years ahead? If this represents the desire of your heart, respond with “We will.”

There you have it. Parents, you’re not alone. You have a church family that is behind you, loves you, and is available to you. I want you to understand and feel the encouragement of what our church just committed to. Can we give these parents a hand of praise this morning?

I’m going to pray over these families this morning. And Church Family, I want to ask you to reach out your hand toward these parents as a sign of your prayerful support, and you voice a prayer to The Lord as I pray over them. [Pray].

### **SERMON INTRODUCTION:**

What a great morning we have already had. Family Dedication and worship. I want to, now, invite you to take your Bibles and turn with me to the book of Acts. If you’re new to Bible study, and it’s okay if you are because we are all new to Bible study at some point, Acts is in the New Testament. It is the fifth book in the New Testament, just after John and right before Romans. We are going to be in Acts chapter 20, zooming in on verses 17-38 today.

### **SERIES OVERVIEW:**

This is the final part of our teaching series, Blueprints: Building Families by God’s Design. I hope this study has been helpful for you and your family.

We’ve talked about the foundation of God’s design. Gathering the power tools of prayer, building walls of security in a healthy marriage, developing discipline

in our homes, raising families that counter the culture, wiring for sound to increase communication, and adding insulation to weather life’s storms. Today, we are looking at a home built to last: leaving a lasting legacy.

### **OPENING:**

You know, when it comes to a legacy of faith, the Apostle Paul has a lot to teach us. We learn a lot from the letters of Paul, but we learn even more from his life. Paul is often referred to the greatest Christian outside of Jesus to ever live. He certainly is the world’s greatest missionary. He left quite a legacy.<sup>ii</sup>

You know, we all leave a legacy. The dictionary defines legacy as a lasting impact of a person’s life. It’s your lasting testimony and influence. I read a quote this week, “Life is a celebration of wonderful opportunities. You never leave it until the last person you know is gone.”<sup>iii</sup> That means that we never really leave life until the last person who knows us is gone. That’s your legacy.

Perhaps some of you younger parents in the room are wondering, “Why do I need to be concerned with legacy right now? We’re just trying to survive each day!” I feel your pain. But here’s the deal. What you are doing right now, each day, is building a legacy. Godly people realize how short life really is and they give time and attention to what kind of legacy they are building.

For some, their legacy is negative. They leave behind scars as a result of the actions taken and words spoken. For others, their legacy is neutral. Yeah, he made lots of money, maybe even left some for us, but did he leverage his life for making an impact? For few, their legacy is profound. A life of godliness that echoes for generations.

No one left a greater legacy than the Apostle Paul. He left a profound legacy of faith. He leveraged his life to carry out his mission. And as a result, his lasting legacy still echoes 2,000 years later. And that’s what we will see in Acts 20.

### **BACKGROUND:**

The Book of Acts details the three missionary journeys of Paul. Travelling over 10,000 miles, he spread the gospel throughout the known world at the time and established 14 churches on those journeys.<sup>iv</sup> On one of his journeys, Paul spent a great deal of time in Ephesus, becoming pastor of the church there. So, in Acts 20, he called the elders together to say his goodbyes. And what’s recorded here is a farewell speech as this will be the last time he sees them.

Now, what's interesting about this speech is that it is the only extended speech recorded in Acts directed toward other Christians.<sup>v</sup> All other speeches and sermons recorded in Acts were directed toward non-believers. And in the speech in Acts 20, we see the kind of legacy Paul left behind. I want to point out 5 legacy statements Paul makes that demonstrates what drove him and how we can apply their principles to our lives as we seek to build families that last and leave legacies of faith.

### **MESSAGE:**

The first legacy statement that Paul says is...

#### **1) I did not shrink.**

In verses 20 and 27, Paul says, "***I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house, <sup>21</sup>testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ,***" and "***I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.***" Don't you love that? I did not shrink.

The word translated, "shrink," means that Paul didn't withdraw, he didn't keep back,<sup>vi</sup> he didn't retreat.<sup>vii</sup> What did he not shrink from? He said that he taught God's Word, he preached the Gospel, and he declared the whole counsel of God. In other words, Paul spoke the truth of God unashamedly. Paul's legacy stems from his love of the Gospel.

Listen, if you want to leave the kind of legacy that reverberates for generations, mom and dads, grandparents, aunts and uncles, do not shrink. Don't shrink in making sure the next generation knows God's truth, His Word. Perhaps more than ever, when truth seems so elusive, we must speak the truth of God.

The truth of God that Paul spoke was The Gospel. The Gospel, the euangélion, is Good News, but it begins with bad news. The gospel is an announcement that the human race is not inherently good, but that we stand under the judgment of a Holy, Almighty God. Why? Because we've rebelled against Him. The Bible calls that sin. We are dead in our trespasses and sins and there isn't anything we can do about that.

It is important to call sin, sin. I understand that people don't like being labeled a sinner, but we can't sugar coat our sin. If we truly love people, we can't shrink in that message. Why? Because the Good News can't be Good News until we

understand the bad news. Because see, even though the truth is bad, the good news, the greatest news, is that God so loved the sinful world that He gave His one and only Son, Jesus, who came and died for us, in our place. Jesus lived a sinless life, a life we could never live, and He died a sinner's death, what we deserve, so that we can be forgiven in Him.

Paul's legacy is profound because of his commitment to be bold in proclaiming truth. And what's so great about Paul is that he did not sacrifice loving others in his proclamation of truth. Call out sin, yes, but do so because you love others and are concerned for their eternity. That's Paul's legacy.

You know, I think our kids pick up on this. What we say about others, how we love others, what we communicate about ourselves, all communicates what's important to us and what should be important to them. Listen, your kids need to know you are a sinner just like them. And by admitting sin in front of them, asking for their forgiveness, they learn that you are a saved sinner, and they can be, too. A life of repentance and following Jesus is an important legacy to leave behind.

So, we don't need to shrink back from calling sin, sin. More than ever before, let's be bold in our proclamation of truth. Because when the world sees their sin, they will understand the love of the Savior.

And so, Paul said, "I did not shrink." The second legacy statement, ...

#### **2) I was constrained by the Spirit.**

In verses 22 and 23, Paul says, "***<sup>22</sup>And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there, <sup>23</sup>except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me.***"

Circle the word "constrained." That word mean "tied to and compelled by."<sup>viii</sup> The best way you and I can leave a lasting and godly legacy is to be tied to and compelled by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit testified to Paul, that is The Spirit prompted him. And Paul's response was, "Yes, Lord."

And what I love about this statement is that while Paul was prompted and led by The Spirit, he didn't know what was around the corner for him, except that he was going to encounter opposition. But he stepped out on faith anyway.

Do you know what our society needs more than anything else? Christian families to be led by The Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is often the most forgotten and most misunderstood person of the Trinity. There's nothing mystical about The Holy Spirit. Simply put, He convicts us, produces spiritual fruit in and through us, He guides us, and He also restrains us. When we walk according to The Spirit, we say the right things in the right ways and we don't say the wrong things in the wrong ways.

But being constrained by The Spirit requires obedience to God. No matter the ask, no matter the cost, obedience to God leaves a legacy of faith. For Paul, obedience to God meant challenging days, afflictions, and imprisonment. But countless numbers of people came to faith as a result of his obedience despite what it cost him.

So, two legacy statements, "I did not shrink," and "I was constrained by The Spirit." Thirdly, ...

### 3) I did not account my life for myself.

In verse 24, Paul says, *"**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."* Paul was an others first kind of guy.

You know, when we think about legacy, we often think about our personal success and accomplishments. But Paul's legacy is the opposite. It is not about himself. He wanted to finish the assignment, his course, and the ministry that was given to him by The Lord. To leave a true and lasting legacy of faith, we have to see that God has given each of us an assignment, a course to run, and a ministry to execute.

Another way Paul put into action his statement about being others focused is that he demonstrated a life of humility. In verse 19, Paul said, *"**19** serving the Lord with all **humility** and with tears and with trials that happened to me through the plots of the Jews."* The word translated, "humility," means, "low, defeated, weak."<sup>ix</sup> This is the opposite of how our society measures greatness.

I find this to be a very intriguing statement from Paul. Because Paul had the accomplishments and the success to brag about. Remember in Philippians 3? Verses 4 through 8. *"**4** though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh*

*also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, **I have more:** <sup>5</sup>circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; <sup>6</sup>as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. <sup>7</sup>**But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.** <sup>8</sup> Indeed, **I count everything as loss** because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. When Paul had reason to tout his success and accomplishments to the leaders of the Church at Ephesus, he talked more about his lowliness.*

I came across a quote in my study this week that said, "[Christianity], at its core, is not about extraordinary men and women of great power; it's about a great Savior who can save and then use the weakest, most broken, and most guilty of sinners."<sup>x</sup> Paul was less interested in being admired and more concerned about pointing people to Jesus.

I did not shrink. I was constrained by the Spirit. I did not account my life for myself. The fourth legacy statement is...

### 4) I did not covet material things.

A lot of times when we think of legacy, we think of the inheritance we will pass down to future generations. And leaving an inheritance is a good thing. Proverbs 13:22 says, *"A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children."* But the legacy Paul left is one of being driven by the Holy Spirit, not the amassing wealth.

Look at Acts 20:33-35 with me. *"**33** I coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. **34** You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my necessities and to those who were with me. **35** In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"*

Paul demonstrated a life of giving sacrificially. All that he had, he gave away and invested in the ministry. He worked hard. He said that his own hands provided his needs. His work also provided for the needs of those doing ministry alongside him as well as ministry toward others. Paul invested in the work of the church. He quoted Jesus by saying, "It's more blessed to give than to receive." And Paul demonstrated that where your money is, there your heart will be also. Let me show that to you.

Not only did Paul invest in the church financially, but also physically. Look at verses 28 through 31 of Acts 20. *<sup>28</sup>Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. <sup>29</sup>I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; <sup>30</sup>and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. <sup>31</sup>Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears.* Now that's investment.

A few years ago, our elders came together for one of our annual elder retreats. We spent that Saturday morning studying this section of Acts 20. And from that study came a statement that is quoted at the start of every elder meeting. Before every meeting our elders say, *"According to Acts chapter 20, Elders at Trinity Baptist Church are humble, have passion, are bold and prepared, are consistent, are Spirit-led, preach the gospel, are on guard, protect the flock, fellowship together, pray for one another, serve and bless one another, carry out our calling."* It is our heart's desire to serve our church the same way Paul served the Ephesians.

Paul left a lasting legacy in statements like, "I did not shrink. I was constrained by the Spirit. I did not account my life for myself. I did not covet material things." Fifthly, finally, Paul said...

### 5) I finished strong.

I'm actually borrowing this specific statement from 2 Timothy 4:7. But I want to tie it back to the end of Acts 20. In 2 Timothy, Paul says, *"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."* Paul didn't coast into eternity. The legacy he left is that he finished strong. And that approach left an indelible mark.

Look now at Acts 20, verses 36-38. This is where we see the impact of the mark Paul left. *"<sup>36</sup>And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. <sup>37</sup>And there was much weeping on the part of all; they embraced Paul and kissed him, <sup>38</sup>being sorrowful most of all because of the word he had spoken, that they would not see his face again. And they accompanied him to the ship."* These men were so impacted by Paul.

Paul lived life in a way that he understood that each phase of his life was an assignment from God. And as a result, he left a lasting legacy of faith. The question then is, "How do we view each phase of our lives? What will we do with the time that we have?" Paul answered those questions when he said, "I did not shrink. I was constrained by the Spirit. I did not account life for myself. I did not covet material things. And I finished strong." How will you and I answer those questions?

### CONCLUSION:

Leaving a lasting legacy of faith begins and ends in a personal relationship with Jesus. The Bible says that we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. That we are dead in our trespasses and sins. But God loved us too much to leave us in that state. And He demonstrated His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. And not only did Jesus die, He was buried, laid in a tomb, but on the third day, He rose from the grave, conquering our sin, death and grave. And by faith in Jesus as Lord, we are forgiven and enjoy a personal relationship with Him. The Bible calls this being born again.

If you're here today and you have not been born again unto a relationship with Jesus, we want to visit with you about that today. Our elders will be here at the front, following the service, and we want share with you how you can have a personal relationship with Jesus.

Maybe you're here and The Lord is speaking to your heart in a different way. You have been born again, but Jesus is tugging on your heart about the course He has for you. Maybe you are just wanting to position yourself to hear God speak to you about the ministry He has for you. We would love to join you in praying over that with you.

Maybe you have another prayer concern, we want to minister to you. I'm going to pray, we are going to stand and sing, but I want us to listen to the still small voice in our heart. God is speaking to you today. Be obedient to His prompting you.

Let's pray. [PRAY]

## ENDNOTES:

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<sup>i</sup> Works consulted in preparation for this message: John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Acts 13-28*, Moody Publishers: Chicago, 1996; Jerry Pipes, *Building a Successful Family: Basic Building Blocks For A Healthy Home*, Jerry F. Pipes: USA, 2002; Ajith Fernando, *The NIV Application Commentary: Acts*, Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 1998; Robert Jefferess, *Leaving a Legacy that Lasts*, sermon preached at First Baptist Church of Dallas, published on sermons.love, accessed online: <https://sermons.love/robert-jeffress/6101-robert-jeffress-leaving-a-legacy-that-lasts.html>; Jack Graham, *Leaving a Legacy*, sermon preached at Prestonwood Baptist Church, published on sermons.love, accessed online: <https://sermons.love/jack-graham/11050-jack-graham-your-legacy.html>; J.D. Greear, *Six Defining Characteristics of a Successful Life*, sermon preached at Summit Church, November 20, 2016, accessed online: <https://summitchurch.com/message/six-defining-characteristics-of-the-successful-life>; Pastor Chris Brown, *The Genesis Project: How To Leave A Legacy*, sermon published by sermonideas.com; James Merritt, *David: Life Lessons from a King: Leave a Legacy*, sermon published by sermonideas.com; Pastor Kerry Shook, *Sand Castles: Building a Lasting Legacy*, sermon published by sermonideas.com; Tim Badal, *UnStoppable – Acts: Leaving a Legacy*, sermon published by sermonideas.com.

<sup>ii</sup> Adapted from Jack Graham.

<sup>iii</sup> Author unknown. Taken from Jack Graham's sermon.

<sup>iv</sup> Ryan Nelson, *Paul's Missionary Journeys: The Beginners Guide*, article published by Overview Bible, July 6, 2020, accessed online: <https://overviewbible.com/pauls-missionary-journeys/>.

<sup>v</sup> Pointed out in Enduring Word Commentary, <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/acts-20/>.

<sup>vi</sup> Strong's Concordance, 5288, hupostelló.

<sup>vii</sup> HELPS Word-studies, 5288, hupostelló.

<sup>viii</sup> Strong's Concordance, 1210, deó.

<sup>ix</sup> Greear.

<sup>x</sup> Ibid.