



Welcome

Message: Why We Need the Preacher
Dr. Lance Watson, Senior Pastor

PRAYER: Gracious God, we desire to live lives that authentically reflect Your grace, humility, and truth in every space you have placed us. Grant us the courage of Paul to press forward without shrinking back, prioritizing your kingdom above our own comfort and refusing to let fear dictate our obedience. Lord, keep watch over our hearts and minds so that we may faithfully guard, encourage, and shepherd one another in love. Thank you for our Shepherd. Strengthen us by Your Holy Spirit to run with endurance, finish the race before us, and boldly proclaim the gospel of Your grace to a world in need of your hope. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.

ICEBREAKER: What is one priority or task in your life right now that you want to finish with excellence?

INTRODUCTION: Our focus this weekend provides a profound blueprint for godly leadership as the Apostle Paul delivers a poignant, heartfelt farewell to the elders of the church at Ephesus. Speaking with deep affection and transparent urgency, Paul highlights the essential responsibility of spiritual leaders to walk with personal integrity, proclaim the full counsel of God without compromise, and faithfully shepherd the flock entrusted to their care. He tells us in no uncertain terms why we need the preacher.

BIBLE STUDY: Read Acts 20:17-28 (NLT): ¹⁷ But when we landed at Miletus, he sent a message to the elders of the church at Ephesus, asking them to come and meet him. ¹⁸ When they arrived he declared, “You know that from the day I set foot in the province of Asia until now ¹⁹ I have done the Lord’s work humbly and with many tears. I have endured the trials that came to me from the plots of the Jews. ²⁰ I never shrank back from telling you what you needed to hear, either publicly or in your homes. ²¹ 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. ²² “And now I am bound by the Spirit to go to Jerusalem. I don’t know what awaits me, ²³ except that the Holy Spirit tells me in city after city that jail and suffering lie ahead. ²⁴ 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. ²⁵ “And now I know that none of you to whom I have preached the Kingdom will ever see me again. ²⁶ I declare today that I have been faithful. If anyone suffers eternal death, it’s not my fault, ²⁷ for I didn’t shrink from declaring all that God wants you to know. ²⁸ “So, guard yourselves and God’s people. Feed and shepherd God’s flock—his church, purchased with his own blood—over which the Holy Spirit has appointed you as leaders.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. **What was your biggest takeaway from the message?** What’s one thing you learned? What questions came to mind as you listened to the message? What points did you find most insightful?
2. **On Personal Integrity and Authenticity (v. 18–19):** Paul reminds the elders that he lived openly among them "the whole time"—with humility, tears, and through deep trials. *If the people in your sphere of influence (family, coworkers, church) looked at how you live day-to-day, what would they say your life preaches about Christ? Where is God calling you to show greater humility or authenticity?*

THE SAINT PAUL'S BAPTIST CHURCH
GROW | PRAY | SERVE



WWW.MYSPBC.ORG • 804.643.4000

3. **On Priorities and Finishing the Race (v. 22–24):** In verse 24, Paul states that he considers his life worth nothing to himself, provided he finishes the race and completes the task of testifying to God's grace. *What is currently competing for top priority in your life, and what would it look like to shift your focus from self-preservation or comfort to finishing well for God's kingdom?*
4. **On Courageous Truth-Telling (v. 20, 27):** Paul says he "did not shrink back from declaring" anything that would be helpful, teaching both publicly and house to house. *Is there a practical setting in your life right now where you feel tempted to "shrink back" or dilute gospel truth out of fear of conflict or rejection? How can the group pray for you to have holy boldness this week?*
5. **On Spiritual Vigilance and Care (v. 28):** Paul urges the elders to "keep watch over yourselves and all the flock." Before we can care for others, we must pay attention to our own spiritual health. *What practices or habits help you "keep watch" over your own heart and mind, and who are the specific people God has placed in your life to guard, encourage, or shepherd right now?*

LIVE IT OUT: Take time this week to thank God for the spiritual leaders God has placed in your life.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Take this time to share group announcements. Announcements can be found at www.myspbc.org. You can also "find, follow and like" our Facebook page at facebook.com/myspbc. Turn on your notifications. Remember to subscribe to our YouTube channel!

CELEBRATIONS: Take this time to share praise reports (e.g. answered prayers, birthdays, anniversaries, promotions).

PRAYER REQUESTS & PRAYER: Take this time to share prayer requests. Close with prayer.

THE SAINT PAUL'S BAPTIST CHURCH
GROW | PRAY | SERVE



WWW.MYSPBC.ORG • 804.643.4000



We Care!

NOTICE: As a small group leader, we depend on you to show members that we care. Here's a list of resources to help you.

FOR PRAYER:

CALL: 804.463.2472

EMAIL: prayer@myspbc.org.

FOR COUNSELING:

CALL: 804.643.6177

EMAIL: care@myspbc.org

TO REQUEST A HOSPITAL VISIT:

CALL: 804.304.3890 (For Emergencies)

EMAIL: ecare@myspbc.org.

TO REQUEST FUNERAL SUPPORT:

CALL: 804.304.3890 (Pastor On Call)

EMAIL: ecare@myspbc.org.

TO FIND A SUPPORT GROUP:

CALL: 804.643.6177

EMAIL: care@myspbc.org.

TO REQUEST EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE:

CALL: 804.643.4000

EMAIL: emergencyassistance@myspbc.org.

TO CONTACT MY LIFE STAGE PASTOR: CALL: 804.643.4000 and Press 1 for the Dial by Name Directory

EMAIL:

- Imagination (0-10): Vernita Williams: Vernita.Williams@myspbc.org
- SMB (11-19): Martina Jones-Smith: Martina.Jones-Smith@myspbc.org
- Dreamchasers (20-29): Juan Shackelford: juan.shackelford@myspbc.org
- Aspire (30-39): Lance Watson, Jr.: lance.watsonjr@myspbc.org
- Fusion (40-49): Michelle Townsend: michelle.townsend@myspbc.org
- Encore (50-59): Lisa Johnson: lisa.johnson@myspbc.org.
- Prime Time (60-69): Maceo Freeman: maceo.freeman@myspbc.org
- Refiners (70+): Roscoe Jones: roscoe.jones@myspbc.org

*GPS is a study guide based on the weekend message. The purpose of this guide is to assist small groups in study.
Previous GPS Guides are available online at www.myspbc.org.*



Small Group Leader Guide

Would you like to START or JOIN a Small Group at Saint Paul's?

Most existing groups are open to new group members, and new groups begin on a regular basis. If you have friends in a small group, ask about joining their group. If you are new to Saint Paul's and are looking for a place to connect, please feel free to contact us and we will do our best to help you find the right group.

Leader Tips:

The GPS document is a guide for discussion. Don't feel like you must use every question. Some questions will take a while to work through while others will be over in a few seconds!

1. Don't teach the lesson. The lesson was taught on the weekend. Just ask questions and let everyone else talk.
2. Let other people ask questions. It's OK to go "off topic" for a while. Sometimes those conversations are more interesting anyway!
3. Have fun. Relationships, not curriculum, are the heartbeat of our small groups. So, have fun with the people in your group.

Agenda for a Small Group Gathering

Gathering Time

Take 5-10 minutes to welcome everyone, catch up and if planned, share some food!

Discussion Time

Here's a suggested format:

1. **Ice Breaker** – Lighthearted icebreaker question (5-10 min.)
2. **Discussion** - Discussion time, Bible study, application challenge (30-40 min.)
3. **Prayer** – Prayer requests and praying for one another (10-20 min.)
4. **Planning** – Remind the group of how we serve together (e.g. usher, sing, greet, pray, etc.)