

SERMON NOTES

SERIES: **Acts: To Be Continued**
TITLE: **What Is Your Why?**
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PASTOR: Charlie Boyd

In Acts, Luke shows Jesus' friends continuing the kingdom mission that Jesus started in his earthly life and ministry. The Book of Acts is all about Jesus' followers continuing his mission in the world. We are the ones God has entrusted with carrying the message of Jesus forward.

In this message, we look at Acts 25 & 26. As followers of Jesus, learning to live mindful of *why* we are here, rather than *what* we are doing is what can sustain us through our most difficult days. We are alive so that we can give to others what Jesus has given us and put the Gospel on display even in the midst of the most difficult circumstances.

Asking ourselves, “*Why?*”

We ask this question because we want to understand the importance or purpose of things.

Answers to questions like “*Why do I get up in the morning?*” or “*Why am I here?*” are what keep us going when things get difficult. If we don't have a good and solid answer to these “*Why*” questions, we can be tempted to give up.

In author Simon Sinek's business book, *Start With Why*, the big idea is this: ***What you do is not nearly as important as Why you do it.*** We can think of a leader or organization in three aspects: *What*, *How*, and *Why*.

What: This is what you do, whether you're a mom, doctor, or a construction worker, etc. Everyone knows what they *do*.

How: This is the way you approach your *What*. The ways you care for your children, the hours you keep, or the methods you use to remodel a home.

Why: This is your purpose. This is what gets you going in the morning or what keeps you motivated.

Our biggest problem is that we tend to live in this “golden circle” of these aspects *outside in*: We know our *what* and our *how*, but our *why* gets fuzzy. This means when our *what* and *how* change or are challenged, we tend to lose sight of our *why* and become discouraged or tempted to give up.

For a follower of Jesus, there aren't many things more important than knowing and living out of your *why*. That is the focus of this passage, as we see Apostle Paul tell us his reason for living, his *why*.

Summary of Acts 25-26:

- Felix, the governor of Judea, has left Paul sitting in jail, falsely accused, for 2 years.
- Each time that Paul talks to Felix, he talks about Jesus and how faith in Jesus shows itself in living in a right relationship with God and people, a life of self-control and one that bears in mind God's coming judgment.
- Paul appears before Festus, another Roman governor, who replaced Felix. Festus didn't want to send Paul to stand before Caesar without a legitimate charge, so he brought Paul before King Herod Agrippa II.
- Agrippa II is the last of the Herods, and is the great grandson of Herod the Great, the one who tried to kill Jesus as a baby. Paul stands trial before a man who comes from a long line of kings who have opposed the truth of the Gospel from the very beginning.
- Because Paul knows his *why*, he focuses on Agrippa's need for Jesus, rather than his own desire to be set free.

If Paul had lived his life *outside in*, focusing on his *What*, he would have ended up being focused on himself, a prisoner, who was being falsely accused and in utter despair sitting in prison for two years. This would have confused his *How*, and then his *Why* would have become very fuzzy, resulting in disappointment and despair.

However, Paul lived his life *inside out*. He focused on his *Why*, knowing that Jesus had chosen him to give to others what he had himself been given: the Gospel, so that through faith in Jesus, they could be forgiven of their sins and become part of God's family.

As a follower of Jesus, learning to live out of your *Why* rather than your *What* is what sustains you through your most difficult days. Your *What* can change because it's too easily impacted by changing life circumstances. Your *What* isn't foundational to who you are because it can change easily. Your kids grow up, you might lose your medical practice, or get injured and unable to work.

For a follower of Jesus, the *Why* goes much deeper than “*to feed my family*” or “*to help others*”. **Your *Why* is your purpose.** The Bible tells us that your *why* is the same as Paul's *why*: **You are alive to give others what Jesus has given you.**

Your *What* and your *How* are different than Paul's. God probably hasn't called you to be a traveling preacher and church planter like Paul, or even a prisoner like Paul. **Jesus has a purpose for your life: a *What* and a *How* that flows out of a God-given, Gospel-driven *Why*.**

If this is your *Why*:

- You want to tell other people how they can find hope by faith in Jesus.
- You want to take seriously the opportunities to share how Jesus can change lives, because he's changed your life.
- You forgive because Jesus forgave you.
- You don't condemn others, because in Christ, you are not condemned.
- You love people who hate you or who are hard to live, because Jesus has poured out his love on you.
- You serve others because Jesus serves you.
- You give your life away for others with no expectation of return, because Jesus did the same.
- You give generously to further God's work in the world, because God has given generously to you.

Your God-given, Gospel-driven *Why* defines your life, no matter what your *What* is, or how your *How* is.

For Discussion:

1. How would you answer the question, “Why am I here?”
2. Do you live a life outside in, defined by *What*, rather than inside out, defined by *Why*?
3. In what ways can you live a life that represents the purpose that Jesus has for you?