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God's Cherished Working Vessels

Acts 28:1-16 * bib.ly/Ac28+NIV

2

Paul's Journey as a Christian

Prophecy about Paul:

“This man is
my **chosen instrument** to **proclaim my name** to the
Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel.

I will show him
how much he must suffer for my name.’ ”

Acts 9:15-16

3

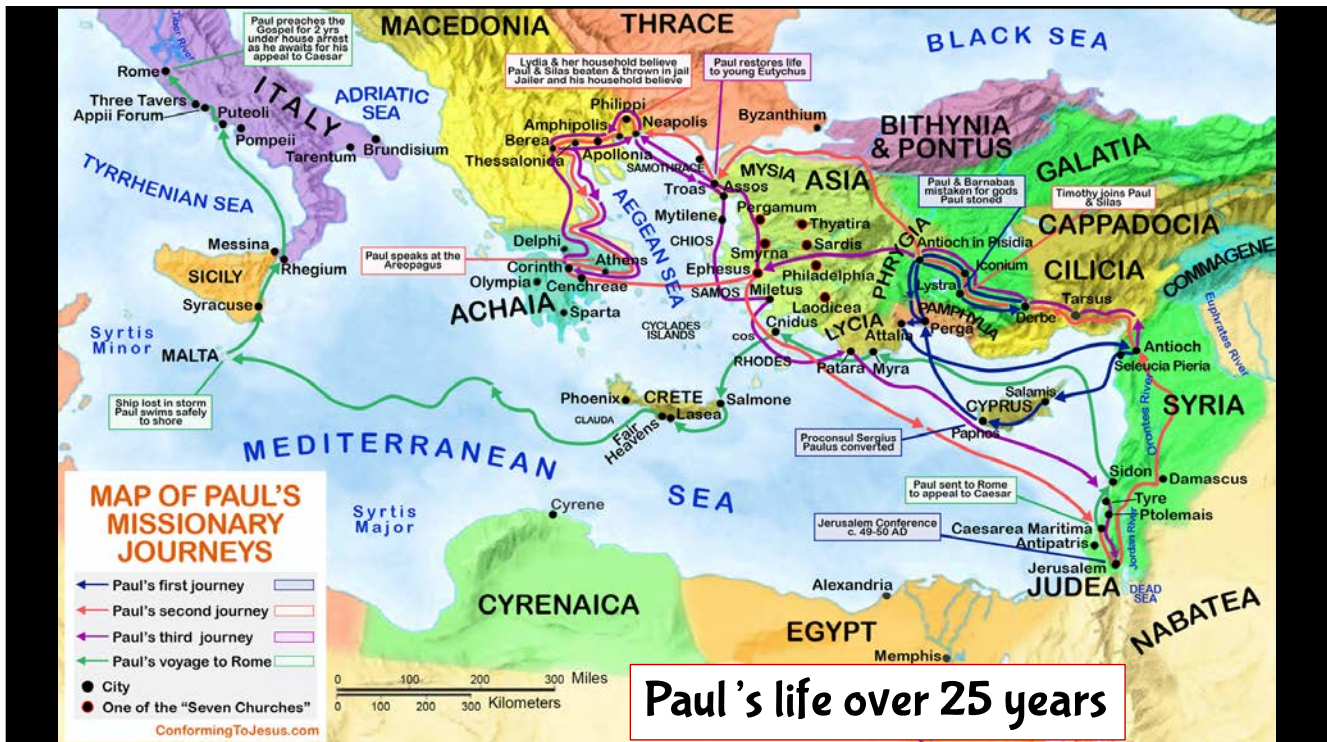
Paul's Journey as a Christian

Paul's understanding of his own life:

“And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem,
not knowing what will happen to me there. I only know that in
every city the Holy Spirit warns me that **prison and**
hardships are facing me. 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 20:22-24

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Paul's experiences in the 3 years leading up to this passage

- Attacked by a mob 21:30
- Arrested by Romans 21:33
- Spoke to crowd, which started another riot 22:1
- On trial before Jewish Sanhedrin 23:1
- 40+ people plotted to kill Paul 23:12
- Transferred to another prison 23:23
- Kept in prison for 2 years 24:27
- On trial before Roman King Agrippa 25:23
- Sent as a prisoner to Rome,
2 weeks in a violent storm, shipwrecked 27:1

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Acts 28:1-16

Once safely on shore, we found out that the island was called **Malta**. The islanders **showed us unusual kindness**. They built a fire and welcomed us all because it was raining and cold. Paul gathered a pile of brushwood and, as he put it on the fire, a viper,

Arriving on the island with nothing at all,

Paul and the others...

- **were cared for by the islanders**
- **were protected by God**

people expected him to swell up or suddenly fall dead; but after waiting a long time and seeing nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and said he was a god.

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There was an estate nearby that belonged to Publius, the chief official of the island. He **welcomed us** to his home and showed us **generous hospitality** for three days. His father was

Paul's ministry continued in full!

Even though...

- **he was still a prisoner of Rome**
- **who had just escaped death by shipwreck**
- **and had lost every earthly possession**

the supplies we needed.

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After three months we put out to sea in a ship that had

Paul was strengthened and encouraged by Christians who travelled to care for him

Even though a prisoner, Paul's ministry continued in person and in writing

found some brothers and sisters who invited us to spend a week with them. And so we came to Rome. The brothers and sisters there had heard that we were coming, and they traveled as far as the Forum of Appius and the Three Taverns to meet us. At the sight of these people Paul thanked God and was encouraged. When we got to Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself, with a soldier to guard him.

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Big Idea

God is present with and God provides for
all His children
and all His churches,
which He calls to serve in His kingdom

That doesn't mean that being a child of God is the EASIEST thing to do

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*Paul: God's Cherished **Working Vessel***

Paul responded to people who claimed they were better apostles than he was. His response...

“Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have **worked much harder**, been **in prison more frequently**, been **flogged** more severely, and **been exposed to death** again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the **forty lashes minus one**.

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*Paul: God's Cherished **Working Vessel***

Three times I was **beaten with rods**, once I was **pelted with stones**, three times I was **shipwrecked**, I spent a **night and a day in the open sea**, I have been **constantly on the move**. I have been in **danger from rivers**, in **danger from bandits**, in **danger from my fellow Jews**, in **danger from Gentiles**; in **danger in the city**, in **danger in the country**, in **danger at sea**; and in **danger from false believers**.

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*Paul: God's Cherished **Working Vessel***

I have **labored** and **toiled** and have often **gone without sleep**; I have known hunger and thirst and have often **gone without food**; I have been **cold and naked**. Besides everything else, I face daily the **pressure of my concern for all the churches**. Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn?

2 Corinthians 11:21b-29

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Big Idea

God is present with and God provides for
all His children
and all His churches,
which He calls to serve in His kingdom

That doesn't mean that being a child of God is the EASIEST thing to do

It does mean that it is the MOST VALUABLE and REWARDING thing to do

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*Paul: God's **Cherished** Working Vessel*

What is more, I consider everything a loss because of

**the surpassing worth of knowing
Christ Jesus my Lord,**

for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them
garbage,

**that I may gain Christ
and be found in him.**

Philippians 3:8-9


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Big Idea

God is present with and provides for
all His children
and all His churches,
which He calls to serve in His kingdom

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**Dustheap
unwanted & unused**

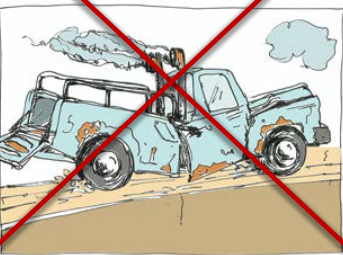


None of God's children are meant for the dustheap


- He loves every one
- He has good work for every one
- This good work is an expression of His love

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**Junker
not valued but used**





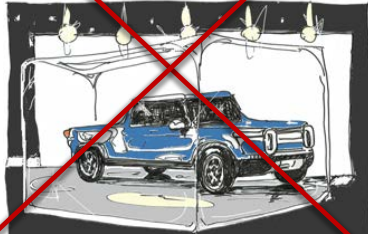
**Dustheap
unwanted & unused**



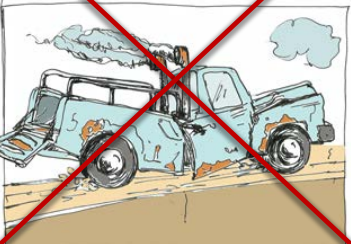
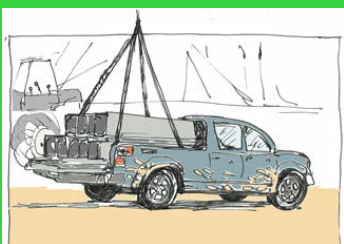


None of God's children are junkers

- He deeply loves every one
- He gives us the strength to do whatever He calls us to do
- He calls us to find rest in Him
- He doesn't merely use us up until we collapse in a heap!

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<p>Junker not valued but used</p> 	<p>None of God's children are meant for a Display Case</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He created us for good works • He calls us to be "living sacrifices" • This good work is an expression of His love
<p>Dustheap unwanted & unused</p> 	<p>Display Case highly valued but rarely used</p> 

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<p>Junker not valued but used</p> 	<p>Cherished Workhorse highly valued & fully used</p>  <p>Work that is.. given by God, done in God's strength, is a joy and a blessing</p>
<p>Dustheap unwanted & unused</p> 	<p>Display Case highly valued but rarely used</p> 

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Big Idea

God is present with and provides for
all His children
and all His churches,
which He calls to serve in His kingdom

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Application

- God calls ALL His children to serve in His Kingdom

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“For we are God’s handiwork,
created in Christ Jesus to do good works,
 which God prepared in advance for us to do.” *Ephesians 2:10*

“So Christ himself gave
 the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists,
 the pastors and teachers,
to equip his people for works of service.”
Ephesians 4:11-12

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Application

- God calls ALL His children to serve in His Kingdom
 - Instructions to first century “slaves”: “**Whatever you do,** work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters” *Colossians 3:23*
 - God’s call can include seemingly “secular” work and seemingly “religious” work
 - God’s call can include...
 - Head: teaching, learning, writing, leading, planning, finance, ...
 - Heart: relationships, compassion, caring, counseling, ...
 - Hands: creating, repairing, helping, cleaning, providing, ...

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Application

- God calls ALL His children to serve in His Kingdom
 - “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, **as working for the Lord, not for human masters**” *Colossians 3:23*
 - Do it as an expression of love for God and love for people
 - By God’s grace, **everyone** is called to serve in His Kingdom!
 - “Although I am **less than the least of all the Lord’s people**, this **grace** was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the boundless riches of Christ” *Ephesians 3:8*

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Application

- God calls ALL His children to serve in His Kingdom
 - What has he called you to do?
 - Ask God and others
 - This week: probably what you were doing last week
 - Maybe God has a new direction, or maybe not
 - Maybe God wants us to do the same work for a new Master
 - Don’t fear hard work and sacrifice
 - Don’t glorify hard work and sacrifice
 - Follow God and His call for you

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Application

- God calls ALL His children to serve in His Kingdom
- Take courage in God's presence and care in our call
 - God's servants are highly valued AND well used

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Every Christian is cherished by God and is called by God for good work

“And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while,

**will himself restore you
and make you strong, firm and steadfast.**

To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.” *1 Peter 5:10-11*

“My food,” said Jesus, **“is to do the will of him who sent me** and to finish his work.” *John 4:34*

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Application

- God calls ALL His children to serve in His Kingdom
- Take courage in God's presence and care in our call
- Encourage (build up the courage) of God's workers
 - Who is doing God's work who might be...
 - Overlooked?
 - Tired and discouraged?
 - Experiencing needs?
 - “Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.” *1 Thessalonians 5:11*
 - As the people did for Paul
 - Are you tired and discouraged?

→ **Ask for help!**
From God and people

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Big Idea

God is present with and provides for
all His children
and all His churches,
which He calls to serve in His kingdom

**Do you know the joy of knowing Christ
through doing the work He has called and equipped you to do?**

**Every one of His children is
a cherished working vessel
in His Kingdom**

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