

Being a 1<sup>st</sup> Century Church in 2009: Proclaim the Gospel  
Wylie United Methodist Church  
Pastor Jeff Hatcher – Oct 4, 2009

Acts 20:16-32

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. 19 I served the Lord with great humility and with tears, although I was severely tested by the plots of the Jews. 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, if only I **may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me**-the task of **testifying to the gospel 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 all men. 27 For I have not hesitated to **proclaim to you the whole will of God**. 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, which he bought with his own blood. 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.

To be a 1st Century Church, we must...

**1. REPENT AND TURN TO GOD**

v. 21 "must turn to God in repentance"

If we are called to repent, then that reaffirms that  
God is holy, and we are not. We are in need of a Savior.

To be a 1st Century Church, we must...

**2. HAVE FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST**

v. 21 they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.

Acts 4:12 (Peter & John before the Jewish leaders)

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."

To be a 1st Century Church, we must...

**3. COMPLETE THE TASK CHRIST HAS GIVEN US--  
TESTIFYING TO THE GOSPEL**

v. 24 I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me-the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace.

DANGERS:

- **DISTORTION OF THE TRUTH -- EVEN WITHIN THE CHURCH**  
v. 30 Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth...
- **BEING DRAWN AWAY BY DISTORTION**  
v. 30 ...men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them.

REWARDS:

- **WE BELONG TO GOD HIMSELF**  
v. 32 "Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace"
- **HE CAN BUILD US UP -- EMPOWER US TO FACE TOMORROW**  
v. 32 "I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up"
- **HE WILL GIVE US AN INHERITANCE -- ETERNAL LIFE**  
v. 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.

John 10:10

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

Eternal life begins RIGHT NOW!!

Our world is messed up. (SIN)

We have the Only Solution. (The Gospel of Jesus Christ)

If we are to be a 1<sup>st</sup> Century Church, we must boldly  
"Proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ".