

Acts of the Apostles - Chapter 20 (NIV)

Through Macedonia and Greece

20:1 When the uproar had ended, Paul sent for the disciples and, after encouraging them, said goodbye and set out for Macedonia.

At the end of Acts 19, the Ephesians had just finished rioting. Things had gotten out of hand and it was recommended that Paul not get involved. Paul must have felt disappointed. Paul was a doer and not one to sit idly by and watch. We are told that Paul was moving on to Macedonia. Before he headed out, he wanted to say goodbye. Paul was also an encourager. We have seen that Paul passed through the cities and town to encourage the new disciples. He had passed through Lystra and Derbe in each of his three missionary journeys. He would write a letter to the church of Ephesus later to encourage them and keep them on the right track. It was not unusual for Paul to show his love to these disciples before he left Ephesus.

20:2 He traveled through that area, speaking many words of encouragement to the people, and finally arrived in Greece, 3 where he stayed three months. Because some Jews had plotted against him just as he was about to sail for Syria, he decided to go back through Macedonia. 4 He was accompanied by Sopater son of Pyrrhus from Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, Gaius from Derbe, Timothy also, and Tychicus and Trophimus from the province of Asia. 5 These men went on ahead and waited for us at Troas. 6 But we sailed from Philippi after the Festival of Unleavened Bread, and five days later joined the others at Troas, where we stayed seven days.

Again Paul visits new converts to encourage them as he passed through Macedonia on his way to Greece. He stayed there for three months. He left Greece because unbelieving Jews caused trouble for him and they plotted to kill him. Paul had planned to go by boat to Syria (most likely Antioch) but because of the Jews, he headed back through Macedonia. He picked up some fellow travelers. One name sticks out, Timothy joins Paul again. Also, the pronoun used for the travelers changes from “them” or “he” to “we”. Luke has rejoined Paul also. Paul’s fellow travelers are representative of churches that were started on Paul’s travels. They are a diverse group. Aristarchus makes you think of Aristocrat and Secundus of someone second in a line. Secundus was a slave name and would have been the second in command in the household. Notice that they are still celebrating the Jewish festivals. They are maintaining their Jewish heritage.

I have heard theologians argue about whether the God of the Jews is the same as the God of the Christians. They contended that the God of the Jews was different because the God of the Christians was triune. I contend that God, the Father is the God of the Jews. I believe this is why Paul and the other Jews followed their Jewish heritage. It wasn’t necessary but it was what they knew.

Eutychus Raised From the Dead at Troas

20:7 On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight. 8 There were many lamps in the upstairs room where we were meeting. 9 Seated in a window was a young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep as Paul talked on and on. When he was sound asleep, he fell to the ground from the third story and was picked up dead. 10 Paul went down, threw himself on the young man and put his arms around him. “Don’t be alarmed,” he said. “He’s alive!” 11 Then he went upstairs again and broke bread and ate. After talking

until daylight, he left. 12 The people took the young man home alive and were greatly comforted.

Notice that these men were eating together. This is what the writer of Hebrews meant in Hebrews 10:25. This type of gathering together is more than just on Sunday. Paul was a talker. He kept on going until midnight. We have trouble with a 45-minute sermon but Paul went on for six (6) hours. What happened to Eutychus might be motivation for staying awake during Brian's sermons, he fell three stories and died.

Verse 10b (NASB) says "Do not be troubled, for his life is in him." "Paul, again receiving the gift of faith from God, sensed that God would raise this boy from the dead – and God did." (Guzik)

"Paul's comment that the boy's *life was in him* refers to his condition after he had ministered to him. Luke would not have devoted space to the raising up of somebody who was merely apparently dead." (Marshall)

They went back upstairs and Paul talked until morning. We are told they took him home and he was alive.

Paul's Farewell to the Ephesian Elders

20:13 We went on ahead to the ship and sailed for Assos, where we were going to take Paul aboard. He had made this arrangement because he was going there on foot. 14 When he met us at Assos, we took him aboard and went on to Mitylene. 15 The next day we set sail from there and arrived off Chios. The day after that we crossed over to Samos, and on the following day arrived at Miletus. 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.

Paul "stayed till the last possible moment, probably to be assured of Eutychus's complete restoration to consciousness and health, and then took a shortcut by land to join the ship at Assos." (Bruce).

One of the NKJV has labeled this section for these verses as from Troas to Miletus. They made many stops but one stop that they skipped was Ephesus. They skipped this Ephesus because Paul's last visit had caused a rift and he had a limited amount of time. See Acts 19:28-29 Notice that they hoped to get to Jerusalem in time to celebrate the Day of Pentecost.

20:17 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 and in the midst of severe testing by the plots of my Jewish opponents. 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.

When they arrived in Miletus, Paul called for the elders of the church at Ephesus. When they arrived, Paul encouraged or exhorted them.

“It is the only Pauline speech delivered to Christians which Luke has recorded, and it is not surprising to discover how rich it is in parallels to the Pauline letters (especially, in fact, to the later ones).” (Bruce)

Paul is pointing out to them that not only did he tell them how to live but he showed them how to live with “humility and many tears and trials” because of the plotting of the Jews. He pointed out that they were teaching from house to house because each elder taught in their houses and not the synagogue. He confirmed what he had already taught them that salvation comes through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. Both Jew and Greek can claim salvation.

20:22 “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; 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.

Back in Acts 19:21-23, Paul is believed to have a vision that he will end up in Rome. It was a premonition of his death. Here again, Paul brings up the uncertainty of things to come for him and the possibility of prison or death. He says regardless of what is going to happen to him, he wants to finish the race and complete the task given to him by Jesus Christ. His God-given task is to testify to the Good News of God’s grace.

“Yet there used to be a gospel in the world which consisted of facts which Christians never questioned. There was once in the church a gospel which believers hugged to their hearts as if it were their soul’s life. There used to be a gospel in the world, which provoked enthusiasm and commanded sacrifice. Tens of thousands have met together to hear this gospel at the peril of their lives. Men, to the teeth of tyrants, have proclaimed it, and have suffered the loss of all things, and gone to prison and to death for it, singing psalms all the while. Is there not such a gospel remaining?” (Spurgeon)

20:25 “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 any of you. 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.

In verse 25, he confirms that he was talking about his death because he tells the elders that he will never see them again. Paul makes several key points in these verses. In verse 26, Paul is not responsible for their eternal death (NLT). Remember he taught them for 2 years. So he told them everything about God or “the whole counsel of God” (NKJV). In verse 28, he said to be good shepherds, keep watch over yourselves and your flocks. In verse 30, he said to be on guard for those that distort the truth.

20:32 “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. 33 I have not coveted anyone’s silver or gold or clothing.34 You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions. 35 In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’ ”

He reminded them that he had worked to provide for himself while he shared the Gospel. He worked to meet his needs and the needs of others but did not covet the wealth of others. Paul quotes Jesus but this quote was _____ included by any of the Gospel writers. The quote is “It is better to give than receive.”

20:36 When Paul had finished speaking, he knelt down with all of them and prayed. 37 They all wept as they embraced him and kissed him.38 What grieved them most was his statement that they would never see his face again. Then they accompanied him to the ship.

Footnotes:

He finished by praying for the elders and their churches. Then he showed them his love. They were sad because he was leaving but even more because he said that they would never see him again.

“Given the strength of Paul’s warning to these leaders, it is fair to wonder how the Christian community in Ephesus fared after this. Some 30 to 40 years later, Jesus sent a letter to this church in Ephesus, found in Revelation 2. He complimented them on many things:

- Their hard work for the kingdom of God
- Their endurance through difficult times
- Their dealing with those who are evil, and with false apostles
- Not giving up when they were weary

Yet despite it all, Jesus gave them a severe warning: they had left their first love (Revelation 2:4). Unless things changed in a hurry, Jesus wouldn’t even be present among them anymore.”

(Guzik)