

The Acts of the Apostles

Chapter 20

Saying Farewell

Memory Verse: 2 Cor 13:11

“Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.”

I. Introduction

- A. Paul today says "farewell" to some of his most precious friends, as he "homes-in" on _____.
1. There comes a time in the parenting cycle where you no longer can make the decisions for your child.
 2. It is at this time that you can only “commend” (surrender up) your child into God's hands.
 3. In much the same way, today we will see Paul as he commends the churches that he has started in Turkey into the hand of God where they belong.
 4. From here on out, Paul will be making just short stops in areas that he has already been in, and will just check on the churches, as he heads back home to Jerusalem
- B. In Jerusalem there awaits a major turning point in Paul’s ministry - where Paul will never be the same, and neither will the churches. Up until this point, they have been so dependent upon Paul, but now will stand on their own, and they will do it quite well!

II. Background

- A. At this point in Acts, we pick up Paul leaving Ephesus and heading west into Macedonia continuing his Third Missionary Journey (see 18:23).
- B. This chapter follows Paul as he quickly makes his rounds through all the cities he has visited before, and then winding-up back near Ephesus.
- C. In the next chapter, we will find Paul in chains and bound for Rome.

III. Lesson - "Saying Farewell" - Acts 20

A. Paul Charts the End of His Last Missionary Journey (20:1-16)

1. Paul leaves Ephesus and heads into _____ (20:1) - an area in the eastern regions of Greece.
 - a. He “_____” the disciples - nothing wrong with embracing, just don’t do it so much that it loses its meaning and effect!
 - b. He _____ the Christians - he gives them a kick in the pants!
2. Visits the Christians in Greece (20:2) - stays with them 3 months. Evidently trying to make sure they can stand without him.
3. Passing through Macedonia, Paul picks up the seven helpers (the fruits of his ministry were not just churches, but MEN totally dedicated to doing the work of Christ - preaching and church planting):
 - a. Sopater- from that great church in _____ that searched the Scriptures daily (Acts 17:10-12)
 - b. Aristarcus of Thessalonica, a special friend (Ac 19:29; Col 4:10)
 - c. Secundus - an unknown helper
 - d. Gaius - had at first been a pastor in _____ (Ro 16:23; 3John 1:1)
 - e. Timotheus - Paul’s most faithful friend
 - f. Tychicus - Col 4:7)
 - g. Trophimus - (2 Tim 4:20)
 - h. Paul had many others like _____ (the author of Acts).
 - i. And some of his men were not always faithful (2Tim 4:9-11).
 - j. Thank God for families, that stay, and grow, and mature as they help build their local church. But thank God also for young men who set off to take the Gospel to those who need to hear it!
4. These seven men were sent ahead to Troas (20:5) while Paul remained at Philippi and celebrates the Jewish _____ (20:6).

NOTE: Now Paul only has ___ days until Pentecost. Paul must get to Jerusalem by then to fulfill his vow that he has made to God to try once more to win the nation of Israel back to God! He evidently wants to recreate the day of Pentecost all over again - but he will find out you can’t!

5. Paul finally arrives at _____ (20:6) - a coastal town back in Turkey
6. He gets together with the Christians in that city
 - a. On the first day of the week (not the seventh day - sabbath)
 - b. The believers came together - church is mainly for Christians
 - c. They came to specifically "break bread"

- 1) In the last chapter we dealt with *baptism* (that a person baptized by John the Baptist needed to be re-baptized once they got saved).
 - 2) Now we deal with Christians having the Lord's Supper.
 - 3) Referred to as "Close" Communion - Paul was not a member of the church at Troas, and yet partook with them.
 - 4) This was a church that broke bread regularly (they celebrated the Lord's Supper often; see 1 Cor 11:26).
- d. The Christians in Troas came together primarily for "preaching." There should never be a gathering of Christians without opening God's word, and somebody declaring some good news!
 - e. They had an _____ meeting - not just on Sunday mornings!
 - f. One man (Eutychus) was literally "bored to _____." He messes up the whole meeting by dying (20:9-12)!

PRINCIPLE: The Lord always has a way of blessing a seemingly "messed-up" service even when things go wrong. Notice that Paul seems to preach *by the calendar* instead of the clock! *An all nighter!*

7. On through Assos, Mitylene, Chios, Samos, Trogyllium, and then to Miletus (20:13-16) - going down the coast of western Turkey.
 - a. Paul wanted to sail "by" Ephesus, without actually stopping there. If he had stopped in, he probably never would have been able to get back out - too many friends, and spiritual family members there - too hard to just drop in and back out again!
 - b. Paul has got less than 31 days to be at Jerusalem for Pentecost.
 - c. He knew that if he landed at Ephesus, he would have had to have dinner at half of the homes before he could leave!
 - d. From Miletus Paul calls for the _____ (Pastors, and mature Christians) of the church at Ephesus to come to him - the entire church totaled _____ in the first century.

B. Paul's Charge To The Ephesian Church (20:17-35).

NOTE: Paul is the example to modern day missionaries. The picture here is one of a missionary leaving a church in the hands of God, no longer able to have the missionary around, but having to make and live by all its own decisions according to the direction of God's word.

1. Paul charges the Pastors at Ephesus (he gives last instructions):
 - a. By first reminding them of their _____ together (20:18-21):
 - 1) Paul's "_____ life and ministry" with them (1Tim 4:12).
 - 2) His faithfulness through all seasons (Cf 2 Tim 4:1-5).
 - 3) His service was to the Lord first (not to man - *not a person pleaser*). Paul lists what is involved in serving the Lord:
 - a) Humility of _____ - your own self-awareness
 - b) Tears of concern - for the lost, and for solid growth
 - c) _____ temptation (Cf 2Cor 6:4-11; 11:21-30)
 - d) Profiting others at your own expense
 - e) Faithfully presenting a life owned by Jesus Christ
 - 4) His preaching style (20:20)
 - a) No holding back - no hesitations
 - b) A _____ ministry - not behind closed doors (Jn 18:20)
 - c) Teaching, and discipleship - wanted them to be fed!
 - 5) His audience (20:21) - Jews, Gentiles, everybody!
 - 6) His fundamental message (20:21)
 - a) _____ toward God - surrender, hatred toward sin
 - b) _____ toward Jesus Christ - confidence that HE and He ALONE is all anyone needs to be forgiven, and fulfilled
 - c) They go for both the lost, and the Christian!
 - i) The unsaved: repent of sinfulness
 - ii) The Christian: repent of each individual sin
 - iii) Both must live by faith (Rom 1:17)
- b. Paul then tells them of his _____ (20:22-25)
 - 1) Going "*bound in the spirit*" to Jerusalem (and then to Rome)
 - 2) Heading into the roughest waters of his life yet. He was expecting "bonds and afflictions" like never before.
 - 3) But nothing can change his course - great determination.

- 4) His desire is to just "_____." PRINCIPLE: You don't have to be *first* in the Christian race; just finish. (1Cor 4:2; 1Ti 4:7)
 - 5) Not even his very life is important to him anymore (Cf Luke 14:25-33; 9:24) - he just hungers to have an impact for God
 - 6) Paul knows he will never see them again.
- c. Paul "takes them to record" (20:26-27). Goes on record saying:
- 1) He is pure/free from the blood of ALL men. He has no regrets about his life efforts, and was glad to say he never hid the light Christ gave him (Mt 5:14-16).
 - 2) He has not kept back anything from them - "*the _____ counsel of God*" (includes Genesis - Revelation; hell, heaven, salvation, damnation, exposing sin, and how to raise your family for God, etc.)

PRINCIPLE: There is nothing more to the gospel than what we find right plainly in the word of god. All other religions that add to the word of god are therefore outside of god's authority: EX. Mormons, Islam, Catholic and Protestant Traditions, etc!!!

- d. Paul now warns the preachers and elders (20:28-36) Tells them to "Take heed" or "watch out":
- 1) _____ - you have the ability to "blow it" for people by letting sin ruin you, and blind people to Christ (1 Tim 1:15; 2 Cor 9:26,27; 1 Cor 9:25; 1 Cor 6:12,13)!
 - 2) _____ (or zoo) that the Holy Ghost has made you "overseers" of.
 - 3) And to take heed, in order that you might:
 - a) _____ the church of God which He has purchased with HIS OWN _____ 1 Pet 5:2,3). Involves preaching and teaching and not tickling their ears (2 Tim 4:2-4).

NOTE: The importance of the blood (Rom 3:24,25; Col 1:14)

PICTURE: Adam deliberately disobeying God's commandment to save his wife by losing his own life. In the same way, Jesus had to deliberately lose his life to save ours!

- b) _____ the church of God (Jude 1:4):
 - i) From _____ wolves IN the flock - Pastors are supposed to protect young and old Christians from bad attitudes that can spread and ruin a church, and from fakers within it.
 - ii) From wolves within *yourselves* - the dangers of leadership and power - it makes wolves of men!
- e. Reminds them, "***For three years I prepared you for this day.***" It took a lot of time and training these Christians to be able to stand on their own feet without an apostle around. They now had their own pastor, their own teachers, and their own commission from God: to reach further into the darkness with the Light!
- f. Paul finally "_____ " the brethren unto two things (20:32):
- 1) _____
 - 2) The _____ of God

APPLICATION: Same thing happens when a missionary has built a church, and now must move on, he has to commend them to God and the word, and then go start another church. God wants local church autonomy, not a hierarchy.

God's word is able to build you up because it is like:

- a) _____ (Heb 5:12)
- b) _____ (Heb 5:12)
- c) _____ (Luke 4:4)
- d) _____ (Ps 119:103)
- e) _____ (Prov 25:11)
- f) _____ (Eph 5:26) What a Diet!!!

PRINCIPLE: A weak faith in the word of God produces a weak Christian. A partial faith in the word of God produces only a partial Christian (that's the majority). A strong faith in the word of God produces a strong Christian!

2. Paul's Last Words to the Ephesians (20:33-35)
- a. I have not _____ things of this world (Heb 13:5; 1 Tim 6:6-8). Paul was content - a right heart attitude.
 - b. I have _____ (2 Thes 3:10-13) - willingness to work.
 - c. I have left you therefore with an example so that you will:
 - 1) Support the weak - therefore, _____ must become strong, and strive to be someone others can lean upon!

- 2) Learn that it is more blessed to _____ than to _____ - Christians ought to be the first to give anything and everything! Minister to one another - fix each other's roofs, cars; mow their grass when they are not well, etc!

PRINCIPLE: You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving. You can even preach, win souls, read your Bible, obey God without love, but you cannot love without doing those things for God.

C. Paul's Closing Prayer with These Ephesians (20:36-38) - Real Prayer:

1. Prayer is an _____ act - not an act for show
2. Prayer is primarily for _____ (Cf 20:24)
3. Prayer comes from the _____ - not from a prayer book
4. Prayer brings out _____ - tears ought to be for:
 - a. Facing into hard times - not that you are defeated, but that you are being honest
 - b. Lost _____ - get the heart of God, and you will never be the same - you will never look at people the same!
 - c. Failure and shame - broken hearts cry - hard hearts laugh and joke on!
5. Prayer brings a church together, and binds them even when events separate them like they were with Paul
6. Prayer gives _____ to go on - don't pray just to go through the motions!

VI. Conclusion - Review of the Principles

IV. Study Questions