

Acts 20:1-16

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[0 : 00] So, good morning. You are stuck with me. I'm thankful the memo didn't get to too many people that I was preaching, otherwise the crowd would be even smaller.!

And so, I was hoping I had two more weeks to prepare, but Brigham came up and said about a minute ago or so, you are ready, and I'm thankful that I can trust in the Lord, that whatever is said this morning, He will use, and I'm thankful for that.

So, just to catch us up, a few things and a quick summary of Acts 19, which Clay will be preaching next week and the week after, to kind of catch us up to where we're at. So, the last time we were preaching in Acts, which was two weeks ago, we looked at the end of Acts 18, where it talked about Apollos, and he was a man who came to Ephesus, and he learned a bit from Priscilla and Aquila. And Nathan talked about how he serves us very well as a model of zeal in his preaching of the gospel, a model of humility and being teachable by other believers, Priscilla and Aquila there, and a model of reputation as he really defended the gospel against all its opponents.

So, there it says that he crushed all opponents of the gospel. Okay, so that was the end of Acts 18. That's where we were at last time. In Acts 19, Paul shows up in Ephesus.

[1 : 37] He continues to work with Apollos, disciples him a bit there. Apollos is baptized. The Spirit works very powerfully in him. And then Paul stays in Ephesus for a while, teaching in the synagogue. And eventually a riot breaks out there because there was believers were being drawn away from worshiping all the false gods there.

And so, that being said, that riot happened, and then we are brought up to Acts chapter 20. So, Clay will teach on all that stuff over the next couple of weeks.

But that is what has just happened. And so, that brings us to our text this morning. It is, I would say, a fairly difficult text.

It was probably the most difficult text I have ever tried to prepare and to link together. So, be praying with me this morning that the Lord will be able to use this time for us to really understand this text and also to be able to apply it.

So, go ahead and read with me verses 1 through 16 here in Acts chapter 20. So, it says, So, on the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the next day.

[3 : 31] And he prolonged his speech until midnight. There were many lamps in the upper room where we were gathered. And a young man named Eutychus, sitting at the window, sank into a deep sleep as Paul talked still longer.

And being overcome by sleep, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead. But Paul went down and bent over him. And taking him in his arms, said, Do not be alarmed, for his life is in him.

And when Paul had gone up and had broken bread and eaten, he conversed with them a long while until daybreak. And so he departed. And they took the youth away alive and were not a little comforted. But going ahead to the ship, we set sail for Assos, intending to take Paul aboard there. For so he had arranged, intending himself to go by land. When we met at Assos, we took him on board and went to Middeline. And sailing from there, we came the following day opposite Chios. The next day we touched at Samos.

And the day after that, we went to Miletus. For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus so that he might not have to spend time in Asia. For he was hastening to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost.

[4 : 33] Okay. So first off, I want to restate the statement that Paul makes in Timothy that we thought through a good bit last week. In verse 16 and 17 of 2 Timothy 3, it says that, So what we

just read is scripture.

And so this statement holds true. So looking at this passage, that may initially be a hard thing to see. So let's look at it, break it down a little bit. So we can basically see two sections here.

The first one in verses 1 through 6 is a bit of like a geography lesson, mentioning all these different places and telling just a lot of where Paul went. There's not much talk here in Acts 20 about why he was going to all these different places.

But if we look at a lot of different cross-references from a few of his letters, we can piece together what all was going on there. And the second, it really is a pretty crazy story of Paul preaching for a really, really, really long time.

A young man getting very sleepy. It was probably very stuffy in this room with a lot of people cramped into it. And he fell out of a window. And he died. And then he was raised from the dead.

[5 : 51] So these are two really, really awesome things. But if you look through this passage, there isn't really a big theological statement. There's not a big exhortation. There's not a big spot where it's explaining some key piece of doctrine.

But, as we just talked about from 2 Timothy, all scripture is read that by God and profitable for teaching, for proof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

So this is true of this passage. And it has proven true so much for me and my study. And I hope it is for you this morning. So the more I studied it and the more I looked at it, I was seeing very clearly just so many ways in which Paul demonstrates his love for the church.

And that was really, really encouraging for me and really just a great picture of what our love should be like for those believers around us. And so I'm going to structure the study in this way, just looking at Paul's love for the church.

So if you're taking notes, I'll just really have three points, and they all begin with this statement. Paul demonstrates his love for the church in his.

[7 : 01] Okay, so three points. Start with that. Paul demonstrates his love for the church in his.

Okay, so point one. Paul demonstrates his love for the church and his concern for their physical needs.

We can see this a lot in verses one through six, but it is not immediately apparent because we don't know exactly why, just from looking at this text, why he's going to all these different places.

But if we look at a few of his letters, we can really piece that together well. So if you will turn with me to Romans 15. Romans 15.

So toward the end of Paul's letter to the Romans, he's talking about making a visit to them, and that's the context where we'll pick up reading. But he's explaining currently that he is trying to get to Jerusalem, doesn't want to visit them in Rome yet because he's trying to get there, because he's bringing support to some poor believers that are there.

So let's read it in Romans 15, verses 25 through 29. So he's explaining why he can't come and visit them right then. So verse 25 says, At present, however, I am going to Jerusalem, bringing aid to the saints.

[8 : 18] For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make some contribution for the poor among the saints of Jerusalem. For they were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings, they ought also to be of service to them in material blessings.

When therefore I have completed this and have delivered to them what has been collected, I will leave for Spain by way of you. I know that when I come to you, I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ.

Okay. So Paul could have used his time he had here on this earth in ministry in any way, but he chooses to make a trip to Jerusalem because he wanted to help the poor brothers that were there. He cared a lot about their physical needs. He cared that they were doing well. So here he's really just explaining to the Romans that he needs to make this trip to Jerusalem before that he comes and visits them.

And so we can see from that that that is what's going on in chapter 20, is he's trying to get to that trip, all these different places that are mentioned, that's where he's going. He's heading toward Jerusalem.

[9 : 22] And because of why he's doing that is just because he cares about their needs. He wants to see them provided for. Another passage that we can gain a little bit of insight on this is in 1 Corinthians 16.

So turn there with me to 1 Corinthians 16. So there's another passage talking about the same collection that he is making for the church in Jerusalem.

So we'll look at verses 1 through 4 here. So it says in 1 Corinthians 16, verse 1, Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do.

On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up as he may prosper. So there will be no collecting when I come. And when I arrive, I will send those whom you credit by letter to carry your gift to Jerusalem.

If it seems advisable that I should go also, they will accompany me. Okay, so we can learn a couple more things about this collection from this passage. The first thing is that he did not want this to be spontaneous.

[10 : 31] He wanted all the collecting to happen before he gets there. He didn't want this to be done out of any sense of guilt or out of any sense of, oh, everyone else is giving to this cause.

I should too. He wanted this to be thought out. He wanted this to be planned. In a book I've been reading with a few guys, it's about musical worship. Bob Coughlin makes this statement that we like to think spontaneous ramblings are more genuine than prepared thoughts, but that is hardly ever true.

So there, Coughlin is talking about actually figuring out exactly what we're going to say before we're talking to a congregation so that we can make sure we're drawing people's minds to the right things. This is the same concept that Paul is talking about in this offering here. He doesn't want it to be spontaneous. He wants it to be thought through of how can we serve these other believers here and what would be the right way to do that.

And so it's not out of any desire to just guilt people into doing something or out of any sense of like, everybody else is doing this, so we need to do this.

[11 : 38] It's more he wants people to have the heart behind serving other people, serving their physical needs here in this case. And so this also, this passage can also help us see a bit of who all these people are back in Acts.

Verse 4 of chapter 20 back in Acts says, So these men came with him, likely to protect the collection that he was trying to get to Jerusalem from robbery, and as really a bit of a layer of accountability there to show that Paul is not using the money for his own good or just trying to sneak money away somehow, just to prove to the churches that he's being faithful to what he has set out to do.

And so really what we can see in our passage then, as he's making this trip to Jerusalem because he cares about the church's physical needs there, he's using his time really well.

And so that brings us to our next point. Paul demonstrates his love for the church and his concern for their spiritual needs. So Paul demonstrates his love for the church and his concern for their spiritual needs.

So the first thing I want to note is all the different times in verses 1 through 6 that we see that he encouraged different groups. So first off, if you look in verse 1, after the uproar in Ephesus had ceased, he encouraged those believers that were there.

[13 : 14] If you look in verse 2, as he went through Macedonia, it says that he had given them much encouragement. Then note that he spent three months in Greece, and he must have been faithful to preaching the gospel there because he ended up with another plot against him by the Jews, and he decided to go and continue to build up the churches in Macedonia and Berea, Thessalonica, and Philippi.

Then in verse 6, we see that they get to a place called Troas where they stayed for a week. And in verses 7 through 12, we get a very detailed account of what that looked like there.

Before we get into that account, I think it would be helpful to see a little bit of Paul's heart in building up the church spiritually because here we see that it's told that he went and encouraged this group of believers.

He went and encouraged this group of believers. But we don't see any actual spelling out of what that looked like. But because we have such, such, such a wealth of Paul's writings in the New Testament, we can see that pretty clearly in a lot of other places.

So I'd like to look at a couple of spots where we can see Paul praying for believers in different areas. So first off, let's turn to Ephesians 1.

[14:34] So really what I'm doing with these passages is trying to show us some of what Paul's heart is in building up the church spiritually there. So here in Ephesians 1, this is a prayer of Paul's for the local church.

At Ephesus, the one we just, in chapter 19, we'll hear about from Clay, where the riot was and all that. Okay, so this passage will sound pretty familiar to those of you that were at the wedding yesterday.

So we're going to read verses 15 through 19 here. So again, this is one of Paul's prayers for the church at Ephesus. So it says in verse 15, And for this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe according to the working of his great might.

And we'll stop right there for now. Here Paul writes that ever since he heard of their faith, ever since he heard that they had put their faith in Christ, he's given thanks for them. It's the first thing he mentions.

Next thing is he is just list off all these different things that he's praying for them. He explodes into a bit of just a big, talking about all the things that the Lord has done for them.

[16:08] Look at verse 17. That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power towards us who believe according to the working of his great might.

And so he wants these believers at Ephesus to really understand what the Lord has done for them. He wants them to understand his greatness, what he has done for them in the gospel.

And so this, we're really seeing Paul want this church to have a big knowledge of the Lord and just to be encouraged by that. He wants the Lord to grant them a spirit of wisdom and understanding in that way.

So there's one spot we can see a bit of Paul's heart and wanting to build up the church spiritually. Let's look at one more spot. So turn to Colossians 1. This one might even be a bit more detailed of what we can see his care for for the church.

So looking at verses 9 through 14 here in Colossians 1.

[17:33] And so from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will and all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, giving thanks to the Father who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. So Paul in his prayer here for the Colossians is explaining what he wants for them even more.

He doesn't stop here at being filled with the knowledge of the Lord's will and all spiritual wisdom and understanding. He presses that even further so that because of their understanding in the Lord, they will walk in a manner worthy of him, that they'll bear fruit in every good work.

Since he heard that they were producing that preliminary good fruit that was proving that they had faith in the Lord, he wants them to do what good trees do, produce more and more and more fruit. And so that is what Paul is wanting for all the churches here.

He wants to give the Lord glory and how that is done is through building up the church. It's through pouring into them and then them being able to pour out to others. It's in that bearing good fruit there.

[18:59] And so he wants them to see them grow up not only in their knowledge, but also in their acting out of that and that bearing good fruit and pressing on further and further. And thinking about how that's done.

In Romans 10, 17, we hear that faith comes from hearing and hearing through the word of Christ. Think about what Paul is doing on these journeys. He's heading to Jerusalem, taking a very, just a monetary gift to the church in Jerusalem.

But what is he doing all along the way? He's preaching the word. It's exactly what he's doing. He's building them up spiritually. And so that's what we see him doing here in verses seven through 12. We see him being very concerned about their spiritual growth. And so that is exactly what he's doing all along the way. We can see his heart in wanting this for the churches to grow up in their knowledge of the Lord and to start acting that out and that bearing good fruit.

Okay, so seeing his heart in that, let's talk about this specific example in Acts 20. So that brings us to our next point. Paul demonstrates his love for the church in his persistence and tirelessness.

[20 : 13] So Paul demonstrates his love for the church in his persistence and tirelessness. So with this, we're going to focus on verses seven through 12 here in Acts 20.

So I pray none of you are sinking sinking into a deep sleep at this point. And I'm very excited that no one's sitting in any windowsills. So it's been a good while since we've read this portion of the text. Let's reread it together. Verses seven through 12 here in Acts 20. So it says, On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the next day, and he prolonged his speech until midnight.

There were many lamps in the upper room where we were gathered, and a young man named Eutychus, sitting at the window, sank into a deep sleep as Paul talked still longer. And being overcome by sleep, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead.

But Paul went down and bent over him and taking him in his arms said, Do not be alarmed, for his life is in him. And when Paul had gone up and had broken bread and eaten, he conversed with them a long while until daybreak and so departed.

[21 : 28] And they took the youth away alive and were not a little comforted. So first off, we can see super clearly just from this, he had so much persistence with this group of believers.

believers. We see so many times that he is talking till midnight, he ends up continuing his conversation all the way till daybreak eventually. And note here that he was planning on heading out the next day.

He wanted to get to Jerusalem. He was trying to make it there by the day of Pentecost. So it wasn't like he had all kinds of time. He was trying to be on a journey there. But Paul loves the Lord, and because of that, he loves the Lord's people.

And so he did not just keep going and keep pressing on, hurrying on this journey. He was so available to them and so persistent with them and just tireless in his efforts here.

And so since he loves these people, he wants them to be built up in the Lord. And that is what we can see him doing. And so he preaches and he preaches and he preaches all the way until midnight. And then he keeps preaching and preaching and preaching.

[22 : 31] The text almost seems to make a bit of fun of him here. So as Luke's writing, he's like, yeah, Paul prolonged his speech until midnight. And talks about the young man drifting into a deep sleep as Paul talked still longer.

To me, it sounds a bit like the old Thursday night Bible studies for those of us that remember that of still talking and it's 1130. I don't know. So in that context, we see this poor guy.

He's late at night. It's really stuffy in this room. All these lamps probably made it really warm. And he's trying to get fresh air sitting in this window sill, trying to do his best to stay awake.

But he couldn't do it. And so that being said, he fell asleep. He's probably like this and just falls asleep, falls out the window. And how terrible that had to be, how much of an embarrassment that had to be with this probably great preaching here.

And he falls asleep and falls out the window. In verse nine there, it says he was taken up dead. If you study that word, that literally means that he was dead. It does not mean that he was just injured or knocked out or something.

[23 : 37] It means he was dead. So, and another thing that we can remember about this is Luke wrote this. Luke was a physician. He was very, very, very qualified to determine whether he was actually dead or not.

He was dead. And so Paul went down and he took him up in his arms and he was alive again. The Lord raised him from the dead. This is definitely a miracle. I believe it would be appropriate here to talk about why we see miracles like this and what is going on in scripture.

And we've talked about that a lot, especially when going through Mark, just to restate a few things that we talked about back then. They're never meant to draw glory to themselves, but they're meant to push glory to the Lord.

John MacArthur often says that the purpose of miracles is always to increase faith. That's exactly what happened here. Notice in verses 11 and 12, they go up and eat and conversed all the way until daybreak and were not a little comforted.

So the miracle that the Lord did here gave validation to the apostle Paul's authority and comforted all those that were there. And so we see it bringing glory to the Lord in this case.

[24 : 47] It validated the gospel. It showed that Paul had the authority there to be speaking these things. I'm sure he had their full attention after something like that happened. Um, so when they go back in, they continued to converse and, um, were comforted all the way till the next morning.

So remember that Paul was wanting to leave, keep going on his journey to Jerusalem this next day. And so he did. So the next morning, um, he wanted to keep going on his journey to serve the physical needs of the Jerusalem church.

He didn't tarry much longer. He just goes and starts up on his journey. Um, let's look at verses 13 through 16 with that. So in verse 13 says, but going ahead to the ship, we set sail for Assos intending to take Paul aboard there.

So he had arranged intending himself to go by land. And when he met us at Assos, we took him on board and went to Middeline. And sailing from there, we came the following day opposite Chios. The next day, we touched at Samos. And the day after that, we went to Miletus. For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus so that he might not have to spend time in Asia. For he was hastening to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost.

[26 : 00] So, Paul on his way to Jerusalem, still seeing that this whole time, he's really been on his way to Jerusalem, but stopping so often and encouraging the church while he's there.

And that is really the biggest thing that this passage really showed me in this crazy story and in all this geography and all these people mentioned.

Paul is so persistent and he is so tireless in his efforts to as he's making this journey with the intention of getting to Jerusalem and not wasting a whole lot of time of getting there, he wants to see the church built up.

He cares about God's people and so he wants to stop every chance he gets and preach. He wants to encourage all those along the way. And in Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, he makes a statement that I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls.

Makes a statement that he's going to go with everything he's got for the benefit of the church. That should be true of us. That should be true of all of our interactions to serve the physical needs and even more so the spiritual needs of the church around us.

[27 : 12] We should want, because they're our family, because the Lord has made us all his people, we should want to serve each other. This passage really reminded me of Jesus' words in Matthew 20, verses 27 and 28.

Here Paul is spending his life for the benefit of the church.

Just as Christ spent his life for the benefit of the church, just in different ways, the Lord gave his life up in taking the sin that we have committed and dying the death for that there on the cross so that for those of us that put faith in him, we can be free from that sin, we can have a right standing with God.

Paul gave up his life to build up the church. He gave up his life fully in everything he did. He was going on a mission to Jerusalem, but he was stopping and preaching the gospel everywhere he went.

And so in that same way, that is the same model that we should be following. We should not be seeking to be served by those around us, but to serve, to give up our lives just as the Lord has given up his, to seek the interest of those around us and not our own.

[28 : 39] And so I think it would be fitting also just to remember what Paul, what his motivation is here. And that's what the Lord has done for him.

That's it. He knew that he was a sinner and had committed sin against an all-righteous and all-holy God that he could never pay a debt back to. And he knows, just as he wrote in Romans 3, that God has been a planning God and he planned to be just and also to be the justifier of those that believe in him.

And how great that is that the Lord has not compromised his attributes of his justice and his holiness, but he has made a way for us to be reconciled to him.

And that is not done without a huge price. That is not done without, in fact, without an infinite price being paid by Christ.

And so just as Christ gave up his life in that way as a ransom for many, for us, that's how we're welcomed in to this family, we should do the same.

[29 : 45] We should follow in that example and that the example that Paul gave us in his tirelessness, his persistence with the church for their physical needs and also for their spiritual needs.

We should do the same. We should follow in that. To be typical, I'll end with a Spurgeon quote. It says, Not for yourself, O church, do you exist any more than Christ existed for himself.

Let that be true of us this morning. Let's pray.