

## **Bibles???**

### **The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority**

Turn your bibles with me to Acts 20 –

We are continuing our verse by verse study through the book of Acts –

We have been seeing how the Holy Spirit worked among the early church.

Now, as we have studied how the Holy Spirit used Paul in taking the gospel to the Gentiles – one of the things we have clearly seen over the last few weeks is Paul's determination to preach the gospel – at all cost.

However, here in chapter 20, one of the things we are going to see is his pastor's heart –

We are going to see that same determination and zeal we saw him have as he preached the gospel – we are going to see that determination and zeal focused on the church.

Let's pray...

**[Act 20:1-16 NKJV] 1 After the uproar had ceased, Paul called the disciples to [himself], embraced [them], and departed to go to Macedonia.**

Now, last week, we left off with Paul returning to Ephesus

Ephesus is the place where Paul spent the longest time.

Luke tells us that he spent three years in Ephesus.

And we learned last week that during those two years, Paul was clearly able to see the tremendous work of the Holy Spirit in Ephesus as many people were responding to the gospel and giving themselves to Jesus Christ.

We can say there was a tremendous spiritual awakening that occurred in Ephesus

However, not everyone was happy about the spiritual awakening that was taking place in Ephesus.

Those that dedicated themselves to the making and selling of idols dedicated to the goddess Diana – they were upset because they were losing business.

So they stirred the crowd into a riot.

And we saw toward the end of the chapter that God quenched the chaos that was going on in the city.

So here, at the beginning of chapter 20 – after everything calmed down, Paul finally makes his way to Macedonia –

And I say finally, because he wanted to go there earlier – but he couldn't because of some of the things that were happening in Ephesus.

He had already sent Timothy and Erastus – and now he goes to join them.

Why was Paul going back to Macedonia?

Remember, he was going to encourage the churches that had been planted earlier: Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea.

**2 Now when he had gone over that region and encouraged them with many words, he came to Greece**

So Paul makes his way to Macedonia and spends time there.

He encourages the believers there with many words –

He didn't simply babble and talked their ears off – he brought exhortation to them using the Word of God.

Church,

When used properly, nothing can be more encouraging than a Word from God.

**[Psa 19:7-8 NKJV] 7 The law of the LORD [is] perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the LORD [is] sure, making wise the simple; 8 The statutes of the LORD [are] right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD [is] pure, enlightening the eyes;**

Again – the key is using the word of God properly.

I had you make a note that afterwards Paul came to Greece – this speaks of him going to the church in Corinth.

**3 and stayed three months. And when the Jews plotted against him as he was about to sail to Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia.**

While Paul was in Corinth – he writes the Book of Romans

And after three months of bringing exhortation – he makes plans to go back to Antioch but just before he gets on the boat – he finds out that the Jews (religious rulers that have been following him around) they are planning to do something on the boat.

Back in Acts 18 – the last time Paul was in Corinth – when he left, he set sail for Antioch – going through Ephesus.

So the Jews expect Paul to do the same thing – they are going to wait until they get in the middle of the ocean and take care of Paul.

So instead of getting on the boat, he decides to take the long way home. (show in map)

**4 And Sopater of Berea accompanied him to Asia--also Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia.**

Now, let's talk about these guys that accompany Paul.

Remember, when Paul set out on his missionary journeys – it was always a two man team – for the most part, sometimes they were joined by Timothy and Luke.

So, now we have the group grows to 9 here.

One reason that Paul takes these men with him was that he was taking the offering Paul has been collecting for the church in Jerusalem (2 Cor 8-9)

I believe this is the reason that he didn't get on the boat – it wasn't because he was afraid of dying – he wanted to make sure the offering got to the church in Jerusalem.

But there's more here.

These guys aren't just representatives of the churches, they're now part of Paul's ministry team.

Some of them we will continue to serve along Paul until he is put to death – and we see most of these guys pop up in his epistles.

However, I want to focus on two individuals.

Aristarchus and Secundus – both from the church in Thessalonica.

And the reason I want to focus on them is because of their names.

The name Aristarcus is made up of the prefix, Aristo

Aristo means – “best of”.

That is why Aristotle – the most famous Greek Philosopher – name means “the best purpose”

We get our word aristocrat from this prefix.

And an aristocrat is someone who is considered the best of their society.

They are those considered as elite.

They have the nice clothes, they have manners, they have wealth, etc.

“Archos” – the second half of his name means “master”

So his name means “best of the masters”

Keep that in mind!!!!

Let's look at the other name

The name Secundus – as you may know because I named my dog Secundus, it means #2

Secundus is not his real name.

You see, most slaves during this time did not go by their name, they went by where they ranked in what they did.

If you were the best slave in a house, your name would be primus (#1)

2<sup>nd</sup> best – “Secundus”

So, out of the church in Thessalonica, you have two individuals – the best of the masters and the 2<sup>nd</sup> best slave in a house.

At opposite ends of the spectrum economically and socially

However, here they are both equal as they serve the Lord.

And church, this was unheard of during this time period.

That a master and a slave would be working side by side in anything – seen as equals

–

But that is what happens when we surrender to Jesus Christ

So these representatives from the churches are serving alongside Paul now.

Think about how incredible it must have been for these guys to hang out with Paul; to watch him and listen to him as they traveled together.

It's one thing to hear a teaching – however, it's an altogether different thing to see it lived out.

These men were able to see with their own eyes – Paul's exhortation to the churches in Galatia -

**[Gal 2:20 NKJV] 20 "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the [life] which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.**

Paul lived it and he lived it well.

That is why he was able to tell the church in Corinth with utmost confidence, “Imitate me as I imitate Jesus Christ” (1 Cor 11:1)

Follow me, mimic me, do what I do.

How does someone imitate another person?

By watching and listening to them closely.

This is why community, fellowship, close, intimate companionship is essential in our lives as believers, as followers of Christ.

We need those examples like Paul who model for us what it means to follow Him.

We need to see Christianity, not just hear it.

**5 These men, going ahead, waited for us at Troas.**

I had you make a note of the phrase, “waited for us” because Luke has joined Paul once again –

Remember, a few chapters back, he stayed behind in Philippi.

Now, he has rejoined Paul and he will continue by his side until they get to Rome at the end of Acts.

**6 But we sailed away from Philippi after the Days of Unleavened Bread, and in five days joined them at Troas, where we stayed seven days. 7 Now on the first**



**[day] of the week**, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight.

I had you make a note that the early church, met on Sunday to have communion.

And I say this because there are some cults who argue that Christians should worship on Saturday and not Sunday.

The 7<sup>th</sup> Day Adventist will make the claim that we worship on the wrong day – they say we should worship on Saturday.

I have heard people say that we shouldn't worship on Sunday because if we do – we are worshipping the sun.

If that is the case, then we shouldn't worship on Saturday because then we would be worshipping Saturn.

Church in reality – we should be worshipping God every day.

**[Rom 14:5 NKJV] 5 One person esteems [one] day above another; another esteems every day [alike]. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind.**

The early church, came together to break bread on Sunday evenings.

Keep in mind that Sunday was a day of work – that is why they met in the evening.

Now, church services back then were pretty much like church services today.

The technology might be a little different –

But for the most part they were the same.

Notice that Paul preached until midnight.

You guys think sitting through a 40 minute sermon is long.

However, the reason that Paul did it was because he knew that he may never see these dear people again, so he took what hours were left to impart as much instruction as he could.

So again, we see the pastor's heart in doing whatever he can for the body of Christ.

**8 There were many lamps in the upper room where they were gathered together.**

Luke is painting a picture here -

People have come together in an upstairs room, the room is nice and warm – it is filled with oil lamps

And again, Paul is preaching the whole night.

**9 And in a window sat a certain young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep. He was overcome by sleep; and as Paul continued speaking, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead.**

So again, we see a lot of similarities from the early church – to the church today.

People fall asleep during church services.

I am not going to name individuals, but I have seen people from the pulpit with their heads down and pass out and I have also seen people lift up their heads with their mouths open and fall asleep.

I am still waiting for the first one to snore.

By the way, the name Eutychus – it means fortunate.

And we will see how fortunate Eutychus was.

Eutychus most likely had a long day at work, he was seeking fellowship with the brethren

he had no idea Paul was going to teach all night,

The room was crowded and warm

He finds a nice spot against the window – nods his head a couple of time

And finally, he can't stay awake any longer – closes his eyes and falls out the window three stories to his death.

Now, there are many who say, Eutychus did not die.

They will say that he only suffered a concussion or was simply knocked out.

But remember, Luke was a doctor. He was there.

He was an eyewitness.

And later on, in verse 10 – Luke makes the point that they brought in Eutychus back alive in the room.

**10 But Paul went down, fell on him, and embracing [him] said, "Do not trouble yourselves, for his life is in him."**

When we studied 2 Kings, we saw that Elisha when God used him to revive the Shunammite woman's son (2 Kings 4), he entered the room after praying and then he laid on top of the son.

Elijah did the same thing in 1 Kings 17 as he stretched himself over the child.

Paul does the same thing here.

Now, think about how tragic the death of Eutychus would have been to the church – but God turned it into a manifestation of His power.

And think about how often God does that in our lives – He takes our tragedies and turns them into triumphs, and we get to witness His glorious power – just like the disciples that night there in Troas.

**11 Now when he had come up, had broken bread and eaten, and talked a long while, even till daybreak, he departed. 12 And they brought the young man in alive, and they were not a little comforted.**

So after God revives Eutychus,

Paul and the rest of the worshippers return to the same room and they ate and then I had you make a note of the word “talked”

By the way, I am pretty sure no one fell asleep after what had happened.

I had you make a note of the word “talked”

Because the word that is used here is different than the one that described what Paul was doing before Eutychus fell from the window.

What Paul did after they got back up and ate – he had an open dialogue with them.

It was a Q/A of everything that Paul had taught them.

He wanted to make sure that they understood and he proceeded to answer all their questions until the morning when he had to leave.

The word that is used is only used four times in the entire New Testament and two of the times it is used is when Jesus had the dialogue with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus.

Just like Jesus explained (talked) to the two disciples about how the scriptures all pointed to Him – Paul does the same thing.

Again, he is imitating Christ.

**13 Then we went ahead to the ship and sailed to Assos, there intending to take Paul on board; for so he had given orders, intending himself to go on foot.**

14 And when he met us at Assos, we took him on board and came to Mitylene. 15 We sailed from there, and the next [day] came opposite Chios. The following [day] we arrived at Samos and stayed at Trogyllium. **The next [day] we came to Miletus.** 16 For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he would not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hurrying to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the Day of Pentecost.

Paul is making his way to Jerusalem –

And they have a pit stop in Miletus.

This is where they are going to get supplies as they sail to Syria.

Now, notice that he doesn't go to Ephesus – the reason is because he didn't want to back track – he was on a schedule/

And he's got a few days before the boat takes off.

And what does he do in those few days?

Rest? No.

He calls for the elders of Ephesus to come over that he might teach them some more, instruct them some more, exhort them some more.

The man is unbelievable in his commitment to the love of the Church.

And next week – we are going to see his message of exhortation to the elders.

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'

