

Acts Chapter 20

V: 1 “... *after the uproar*...”

- In the previous chapter Demetrius the silversmith had stirred up this big riot where the angry mob filled the theater in Ephesus, that theater held about 24,000 people. No small stir.
- The bottom line is that the uproar started because Paul was preaching the truth, and the world doesn't want to hear the truth.
- Jesus is truth, which means He's not “politically correct” - He and Paul called sin for what it is, sin - and he wasn't afraid to call out the religious leaders on their hypocrisies and pretenses.
- The world and the true church can never coexist peaceably, the only way for that to happen is for the church to compromise on the truth and make friends with the world.

James addresses this head on:

James 4:4 “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”

- Paul gathers with the disciples, he embraced them and said his farewells and heads into Macedonia.

(Map) Travelogue: Back to Macedonia (Philippi, Apollonia, Thessalonica, Berea)

V: 2 His purpose in going back to Macedonia was to encourage them, to exhort them in their faith.

- Paul was a shepherd and the wellbeing of the churches he planted was constantly on his heart. As he described his sufferings in ministry to our Lord he mentioned:

2 Corinthians 11:28 “Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.”

- Paul describes in his first letter to the Corinthians that besides encouraging the churches of Macedonia and Achaia he was taking up a collection for the church in Jerusalem which had fallen on hard times. He was hoping to minister to the Jews with a gift from the Gentile part of the church, part of breaking down some of walls.

1 Corinthians 16:3 “And when I come, whosoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem.”

V: 3 So Paul moves from Macedonia down into Greece, where he ministers for the next 3 months.

- Paul initially intended to sail from Greece back to Seleucia / Antioch of Syria, then head to Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost, but he got wind of an assassination plot, that the Jews were going to kill him along the way.
- There were other Jews who were also traveling back to Jerusalem for the feast, and it would be very easy for them once they were out to sea to just grab Paul and toss him overboard. Which for most of us would end our earthly ministry, but Paul would probably have been swallowed by a great fish and delivered directly to Joppa, or perhaps he would have taken a long walk on the ocean floor.... (which he would later do) (“A night and a day I have been in the deep.” 2 Cor. 11:25)
- Paul gets wind of the assassination plot and changes his plans, opting for the overland route. Bear in mind that he is also carry a large sum of money, the offering that he’s taking back to the church in Jerusalem.
- Paul saw obvious trouble and avoided it. It’s always a mistake to deliberately put yourself in jeopardy. If you can avoid trouble, avoid it. We can’t always do that, sometimes God distinctly directs us into it, but unless He is specifically guiding us that way we should avoid it.
- Sometimes people feel they’re being more spiritual by stepping into danger; “I’ll just trust the Lord....” Jesus teaches us not to “tempt the Lord...”

Matthew 4:5-7 “⁵Then the Devil taketh Him up into the Holy City, and setteth Him on a pinnacle of the Temple, ⁶and saith unto Him, if Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down: for it is written, He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee: and in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone. ⁷Jesus said unto him, it is written again, thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.”

Proverbs 22:3 “A prudent man forseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished.”

“Life is tough, but it’s tougher when you’re stupid” - John Wayne

V: 4 We have a list of Paul’s travel companions from the different churches:

1. Sopater of Berea.
2. Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica.
3. Gaius and Timotheus of Derbe (Galatia),

- Aristarchus and Gaius were with Paul when the riot broke out in Ephesus, they were caught by the crowd and we weren't sure what happened to them at that time. Aristarchus was later imprisoned with Paul in Rome.
- 4. Tychicus (**Tic-ic-us**) and Trophimus of Asia (Ephesus). Tychicus was later with Paul in Rome and he carried Paul's letters to the churches in Ephesus and Colosse, and to Philemon.

Ephesians 6:21 (Colossians 4:7) "But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things."

- Tychicus is mentioned in Paul's letters to the Ephesians, Colossians, Timothy, and Titus, and also delivered the letter to Philemon. Paul's courier.

I'm reminded of:

Romans 10:15 "... how beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!"

- Paul's travel companions may well have been representatives from the various churches that were sending the offering to the church in Jerusalem, this would have served the purpose of both safety and accountability, not to mention fellowship.

V: 5-7 We see in these verses an "un-listed" travel companion.

- "*us*" and "*we*" refers to Luke who recorded this account.
- A few years earlier, Luke had stayed behind in Philippi when Paul had left there, now he rejoins Paul.
- This group of co-laborers sailed ahead to Troas, while Paul and Luke waited for another ship, leaving from Philippi to Troas where they hung out for a week.
- On the first day of the week (Sunday) they met with the disciples and Paul preached and taught.
- It's possible that the Jewish church continued to meet on Saturday, the Sabbath day as part of a continuation of the traditions and Law - they still do today in Israel simply as a matter of convenience since the Sabbath is a national observance.
- There is no scripture or indication at all though that the Gentile church ever met on Saturday, they are recorded as always meeting on the first day of the week, Sunday.

1 Corinthians 16:2 “Upon the first day of the week let everyone of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.”

- There are some, like the 7th Day Adventists who insist on worshipping God only on Saturday, and that those who worship God on Sunday will go to hell, they say it's the “mark of the beast.”
- They insist that Sunday worship was introduced by the Roman Emperor Constantine as part of the perversion of the church. Sadly they don't know their Bible or church history.
- We read here in **Acts 20:7** and in 1 Corinthians 16:2 which both describe Sunday worship gatherings. Tertullian, an early church theologian who lived 100 years before Constantine was born declared the first day of the week was the proper day to meet and worship because that was the day that Jesus rose from the dead.
- Some who persist in blaming Constantine for the change say that he was inserting pagan culture and practices into the church because the word “Sunday” is a reference to the sun God.
- Those same people then should have a problem with the word “Saturday” is a word that derives it's use from the worship of Saturn, like Saturn day.
- Constantine is responsible for blending paganism into the church, which we refer to as “Roman Catholicism” - but not the day of the week that we gather to worship.
- Everyday is a good day to gather and worship!

Romans 14:4-6 “⁴Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand. ⁵One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. ⁶He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the days, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.”

- In other words, it's not worth the argument, do what the Lord has put on your heart and do it as unto Him.
- They gathered on the 1st day, Sunday, to “break bread” which is a reference to having communion together.

Acts 2:42 “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”

- Paul taught an all nighter... Paul knew that bonds and imprisonment awaited him in Jerusalem (V:22) and he didn’t think he would see these brothers ever again so he gave them all that he could while he was there.
- The preaching and teaching of the Word was a prominent fixture in the early church. The services included reading portions of the OT scriptures, and any of the apostolic letters that were available.

1 Timothy 4:12-13 “¹²Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. ¹³Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.”

Colossians 4:16 “And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.”

- God’s Word should be an integral part of any service that seeks to honor Him.

2 Timothy 4:2 “Preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.”

V: 8-9 Paul was preaching a “killer sermon...!” “*Paul was long preaching ...*” is there any other way?!

- Mention is made of the many lights in the upper chamber - meaning #1 it was warm and cozy, #2 carbon dioxide poisoning was putting them to sleep - (not Paul’s preaching...) It was probably pretty crowded, lots of 98.6’s raising the temperature.
- Either way Eutychus who was sitting on the window ledge, conked out, fell asleep, then rolled out of the 3rd story window falling to his death.

Romans 13:11 “And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep...”

V: 10-12 Paul went down to where Eutychus had fallen, and fell upon him, hugging him - sometimes all you need is a hug... then he went back up and said “don’t sweat it...” (loose translation)

- They then broke bread, had communion - then had a meal or an “agape feast.”
- Paul told those who were present that Eutychus would be ok, and I’m not sure of the exact chronology of this, but how cool is it to have a “communion service”

that is somehow connected to the miracle of the raising of a dead man back to life!

- Great sermon illustration!
- Paul hung out afterwards having fellowship until the break of day.
- They brought Eutychus back in alive - and they were all greatly comforted. It also attested to God's work and influence through Paul.

I'm figuring Eutychus for a believer:

Proverbs 24:16 "For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again..."

- This is a cool miracle of God; Eutychus fell to his death, then God through Paul raised him back up again.
- In the Old Testament we see God use both Elijah and Elisha to raise people from the dead; in the NT we see Jesus raise up Jairus' daughter, Lazarus, and the widow's son, God used Peter to raise Tabitha from the dead.
- The book of Acts is an open book in the sense that it is still going on today, we're in Acts 29 or 30 or 126 or something.

Jesus said:

John 14:12 "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father."

- Thus far we've seen The Lord's Day, the Lord's people, the Lord's supper, the Lord's message, and the Lord's power, all rolled into one service!

V: 13-16 (**Map**) Troas to **Assos**, 30 miles by sea, 20 miles by foot. Paul walked by himself for a day, sometimes you just need to walk, and talk with God. All this while the rest sailed, they met up in Assos then they sailed to **Mitylene**.

- **Mitylene** to **Chios** to **Miletus**.
 - Miletus was a large port city where they could purchase provisions for the remainder of their journey on the open seas back to Seleucia in Syria, then to Jerusalem for the feast.
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V: 17 (Map) Paul landed in Miletus and sent to Ephesus for the elders to come to him. Understand that “elders” refers basically to mature believers, Pastors, and teachers.

- Miletus was a large port city, where they could take on provisions for their journey on the open seas to Syria. Ephesus was in the opposite direction and out of the way.
- Calling for the elders of Ephesus to meet Paul in Miletus was no small thing, it was a 30 mile trip overland, but they came. 1 1/2 days traveling on foot.
- These men all had jobs, responsibilities, families - but they made themselves available. That is one of the hallmarks of ministry - availability, and a willingness to be used.

V: 18-19 As they gathered, Paul testified how that he had ministered unto them over the last 3 three years, and that they knew him, how he'd lived among them and served the Lord with humility, through tears (difficult situations) and temptations (trials) and how the Jews had opposed and afflicted him.

- Paul did his best to live a circumspect life before them, he was a good witness. You get to know people better when you hang out with them, living with them, among them accelerates that process.
- Through the tears and temptations they'd seen the Lord in Paul, as I hope people would see the Lord in each of us.

1 Thessalonians 1:5-6 “⁵For our Gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. ⁶And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost.”

- Paul further described his life, ministry, and witness:

1 Thessalonians 2:3-10 “³For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile: ⁴But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts. ⁵For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness; God is witness: ⁶Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ. ⁷But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children: ⁸So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us. ⁹For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for laboring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached

unto you the gospel of God. ¹⁰Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe.”

- ¹⁹Paul never lost sight of the fact that he was serving the Lord, this is vitally important for anyone who is serving the Lord, not to lose sight of that fact.
- Paul’s trials came primarily from the Jews, whom he loved so much, and so much wanted to minister and witness to, but they were always plotting against him, trying to kill him, and thwart his ministry.

V: 20 Paul didn’t hold anything back that was good for them, he gave them the truth.

2 Corinthians 12:15 “And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved.”

- Remember that every afternoon / evening Paul taught in the school of Tyrannus, his public teaching ministry.
- Paul also taught as we read here from house to house. I love this - yes there is a place for the public / large group setting, but also for the home fellowship style of teaching, and one on one with people. Talking, kicking things around, answering questions about the faith, about the Bible, and the practical issues of life.

V: 21 The Jews were his greatest antagonists, but he never stopped preaching to them.

- The writer of Hebrews tells us that repentance and faith are foundational truths:

Hebrews 6:1 “Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God.”

- The exhortation is to move on from these basic things onto fuller maturity in Christ Jesus.
- Repentance is key, which is why it’s the very first word of the Gospel spoken both by John the Baptist, and Jesus Himself.

Matthew 4:17 “From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

- And of course adding to repentance: faith in Jesus.

Hebrews 11:6 “But without faith it is impossible to please Him; for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.”

V: 22-23 Paul knew that he was walking into trouble, he knew that as the Holy Spirit guided him he would be imprisoned - but that God would use this to further the gospel.

- Several times Paul introduced himself just as he did to the Philemon:

Philemon 1 “Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ...”

- Paul was willing to suffer for his faith and did so:

2 Corinthians 11:23-28 “²³Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. ²⁴Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. ²⁵Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; ²⁶In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; ²⁷In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. ²⁸Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.”

- What have we suffered for the sake of the Gospel? The things that were on my list pale in comparison. We get our feelings hurt over silly, foolish things, things that don't compare to being beaten and all the things that Paul dealt with.

V: 24 “*But none of these things move me...*”

- Paul will not be moved away from his faith; he will be steadfast in the faith.

Psalm 16:8 “I have set the Lord always before me: because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.”

- Nothing is going to stop him, he doesn't count his life dear to him. He has a reckless abandon for the Lord.
- So often we try to hang on to life in so many ways, but the life that is given over to Christ is true life.

Philippians 1:21 “For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”

Jesus said:

Matthew 16:25 “For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it.”

V: 25 Reality: you won't see me again. Paul was assuming he'd be executed in Jerusalem. Some of the early church fathers did see him again.

- Clement was a disciple of Paul's and the third Bishop of Rome, he wrote to the church in Corinth how Paul had gone to the "extremity of the west" meaning Spain. Jerome and Chrysostom also describe Paul going to Spain and other places after being released initially by Nero.

V: 26 As a minister of Jesus Christ, I have a great responsibility to speak the truth of God and to warn men of the penalty of their transgressions.

James warns:

James 3:1 "My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation."

- Paul took his call to preach the Gospel very seriously:

1 Corinthians 9:16 "For though I preach the Gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!"

- As Paul was declaring that he was pure or innocent of the blood of all men he was probably thinking of the admonition in Ezekiel's prophesy:

Ezekiel 3:17-21 "¹⁷Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. ¹⁸When I say unto the wicked, thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. ¹⁹Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul. ²⁰Again, when a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumblingblock before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand. ²¹Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous man, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; also thou hast delivered thy soul."

- Paul was saying he didn't have any mans blood on his hands, he has shared readily with everyone.

V: 27 He could say that he's innocent of the blood of all men in part because he had declared the whole counsel / all the counsel of God to them.

- Paul had been in Ephesus for 3 years and no doubt had gone through all of the scriptures with them, he'd gone through the Law, the prophets, the books of poetry and had declared all that Jesus had declared to him.

- Today the only way any of us can make that kind of a statement is to literally go through all of the scriptures together from Genesis to Revelation, book by book, chapter by chapter, verse by verse.
- I know of a few pastors that claim to have gone over the whole Bible, and they have taught in all the books, but I've also seen them conduct a "survey" of scripture, skipping parts here and there.

V: 28 Paul says, "take heed" meaning be careful, be circumspect regarding the ministry which the Holy Spirit has commissioned you to as overseer's and ministers to the church.

- Take heed to yourselves - make sure you're walking the talk before you talk the walk...

Matthew 7:3-5 "3And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? 4Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? 5Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."

- To feed them.

Jesus' direction to Peter:

John 21:17 "... feed My sheep."

Isaiah 40:11 "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young."

- We to deal tenderly with those whom he's entrusted to our care, and to make sure they are fed - fed the Word of God.

Jesus declared:

Matthew 4:4 "... man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

Jeremiah declared, speaking for God:

Jeremiah 3:15 "And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding."

- The commission is to feed the church, not to entertain it, or to coddle it, or to grow it - simply feed the sheep.
- Notice who's church, who's flock it is:

“...*the church of God, which He purchased with His own blood.*”

V: 29-30 It seems that wherever there are sheep, there are also wolves waiting to kill and destroy.

Jesus warned us about false prophets:

Matthew 7:15 “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.”

- It would be nice if false prophets came with the appropriate labeling or attire; perhaps red leotards with a red pitchfork... but their business is deceit.
- How can you tell if you’re dealing with a false prophet?
- One of the first things in police work when identifying a threat is to see their hands - in this case if their hands are in your wallet then that’s a clue.

Another as Peter explains it:

2 Peter 2:1-3 “¹But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. ²And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. ³And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.”

1 John 4:1 “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.”

- False prophets will be speaking perverse things, things contrary to the Word of God, and seeking to draw men to themselves, their way of thinking as opposed to the Lord.

V: 31 Paul knew that these false teachers would come and seek to take advantage of the flock, the only way to prepare for that is to feed them and equip them in the Word of God.

John 8:31-32 “³¹... if ye continue in My Word, then are ye my disciples indeed; ³²and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

- On several occasions Paul actually identified by name some of these false prophets; I believe he’s set a precedent and that for the safety of others, it’s ok to name and identify them.

V: 32 Paul commends these believers to the Lord, and to the Word of His Grace.

- Commended to the Lord, to His precious care and protection.
- Commended to His Word, that which would cause them to grow, to be strengthened, that which would help them to discern the truth in every situation.
- Commended to the grace of God - knowing that false teachers will come in and seek to put a yoke of bondage or legalism upon them, to trust in works, instead of the finished work of Jesus on the cross.
- Commending them to a personal relationship with God based on faith, based on His grace / unmerited favor.

V: 33-35 Paul has done the opposite of what the false prophets will do, he worked with his hands as a tent maker, he didn't covet any man's silver or gold, he sought not to be burdensome, but to be a good witness in their midst.

- Paul declared what Jesus said: *"It is more blessed to give than to receive."*

V: 36-38 It's been said that Paul was a fairly short, un-attractive man, with a large crooked nose, and runny eyes - yet here they are hugging and kissing him. His physical stature didn't matter - he was beautiful on the inside, filled with the Holy Spirit.

- They all thought they'd never see each other again, and maybe not in this world, but in the world to come, in glory - oh what a reunion awaits!