

(P.) -
(30 yrs at church) - Rec -
Sim. July 8, 84 A.M.

THE THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY COMPLETED

Acts 20

INTRODUCTION:

We begin the third missionary journey in the latter part of chapter 18. And the whole of chapter 19. We discover that Paul carried on a great ministry at Ephesus. He worked there in a school house for at least two years teaching the people. And Paul had to contend with pagan superstition. And had experiences with miraculous soothsayers and the unusual experience of a bond fire.

Paul made plans at Ephesus - he wanted to take up a collection for his church at Jerusalem. And for the poor Christians. He also had in his mind that he wanted to go to Rome. Paul met the opposition of idols in Ephesus. And had quite an experience as the city was left in an uproar. The town clerk finally brought an order to the town and Paul was able after the uproar had ceased - he decided that he would make plans to move on.

The entire chapter 20 deals with farewell visits, a farewell service, and a farewell message. These three ideas.

I. FAREWELL VISITS - (V. 1-6)

V. 1 - After the uproar in the city ceased, Paul embraced the Christians there in Ephesus. And made his departure and the first visit he is going to make is in Macedonia. It seems like a man with the qualities of Paul - that he would have no stumbling blocks in his path. There would have been no clouds in his sky.

But the facts are otherwise. The uproar remained in Ephesus for quite awhile and finally they settled down. And Paul goes to Macedonia where he stays for perhaps 3 months. He was on the old battle ground and of course other difficulties. There he built up the work.

V. 2 - He revisited Greece - he covered all of these parts exhorting, teaching. And instructing.

V. 3 - He stayed here for 3 months. And he found he had other difficulties in the way. The Jews had arranged a plot - and when this was discovered, Paul had to leave Macedonia again. Now Luke passes over this work in Macedonia with a single reference. And when he comes to Greece and Corinth to revisit, he finds antagonism has been built up. He moves through cities he has already visited. He has already founded churches in these areas. He probably spoke to the believers in Athens. And finally came to Corinth. Where he stayed about 3 months. Paul is mentioned here by Luke. Probably he might have stayed at least a year. Many of these incidents we would like to know a great deal more about. They are not recorded.

4 There were several who accompanied him in V. 4. As someone has likened it unto a traveling seminary. That as he went through these areas, in order to encourage the believers, he collected collections for the saints in the Gentile churches. He received money for relief funds. Poverty-stricken believers back in Jerusalem. And there were several people that journeyed along with him. And they were gifted men and they assisted Paul. Paul intended to sail directly from Corinth to Antioch and then go on to Jerusalem for he wanted to be there for

the feast of the passover. But when the rumors of this plot were discovered, he had to somewhat change his course. And there were friends, however, that always kept the Apostles informed. So Paul went back over land, through Macedonia, through Thessalonica, to Philippi - and here is where Luke joined them again.

V. 6 - Where he says they sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread. And came unto them to Troas - it took them five days for this journey. Paul was urging the churches to give and charity was not an invention of the Christian church. Because in the Old Testament, they put a great deal of stress upon charity deeds. Care for the widows, the orphans, and the fatherless. And Paul used this Christian charity - that it should be done in the name of Jesus Christ. These farewell visits were very interesting. As Paul came back to these churches. And of course, Luke simply says he went through those regions and encouraged the people with many messages.

II. THE FAREWELL SERVICE

They are now at Troas. And it says that they abode here for seven days. They were probably awaiting a ship or passage to move on to their next destination. But Paul stopped here with a little group of friends. Luke was there also.

V. 7 - And upon the first day of the week when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them. And he continued his speech until midnight. Here we find in this farewell service at Troas, the first time the Christian church is observing the Lord's Day. I Cor. 16:2, Rev. 1:10.

They are breaking bread at the Lord's Supper. Our Sabbath is a day in which we should continue to thank God. It is a memorial of Christ's resurrection.

And the breaking of bread was the memorial of his death. Paul seems to have waited the whole week to get the opportunity to administer the word to them.

If we really considered it, we have too few Sabbath's in our country - to minister the word. And the day that we have set aside, we ought to sanctify it and it ought to be long preserved. And have a great place in our Christian experience.

Here is a note about preaching. All of the brothers and sisters came to church to hear Paul preach. Paul's preaching was great because of what he preached. They never tired of hearing Paul, and hearing a preacher once may not be a good sample. We may have to listen to him for a month or a year, or many times before we get a sample of his preaching.

From the evidence here in this farewell service, Paul did not deliver a short essay. He did not speak for just about 10 minutes on this occasion. I do not know what time the service was turned over to him really. If it was something like one of our modern services - sometimes, especially when you have a special service of a certain kind - you may begin the meeting 10 minutes late, and spend 45 minutes of preliminaries and then the people are tired out by the time the preacher gets a chance to preach. Now I like to begin a service on time and I like to quit on time. People have only so much time. And there are exceptions to this rule, of course. The Holy Spirit may be working during the invitation or in other ways. However, if we begin our services on time - then we ought too as a rule be able to allow so much time for a sermon.

I don't know what happened that night, if they had a lot of special items going on before Paul got the service.

We know that it was a hot night and the service was held on the third floor and all the windows were left open to catch the passing breeze.

V. 8 - Luke emphasizes that there were many lights in the upper chamber. Where they had gathered. Perhaps these were fastened around on the wall, to give good light, to the situation. And it may have been that these lamps or torches made the air stuffy and oppressive.

V. 9 - A young man by the name of Eutychus had found the best seat in the house. He was seated in the window. And the young man got sleepy and he decided to rest his eyes. I might insert that some people do that today. And soon, he was nodding. Some people do that also. I read the story once where a preacher's wife said, I believe that everybody was well pleased with your sermon this morning. She said to her husband. And he asked her why. And she replied, I noticed everybody nodding.

Now Luke with a physician's eye, caught these little things. At any rate about this young man who was fighting a losing battle as he was seated there in the window. And the next thing you know, he dropped off to sleep. No doubt some of the members near by were watching him. Here he is, he is swaying forward and backward. And they punch each other.

Sure enough, now whether a fly lights on him, or a mosquito bites him - but he goes backwards. And then they see the bottom of his shoes. Now Paul says something is wrong here. And in that deep sleep, he fell from the third floor.

Now this man suffered severely. This was his first sleep in the church, and

the man nearly lost his life.

It is dangerous to fall asleep in church. One way to avoid this is to go to bed early on Saturday night. Or to get plenty of rest.

I read about a Pastor once who asked a lady, was your husband ill this morning during the service. ^{Noted he walked out,} Mrs. Smith said no, it is his terrible habit of walking in his sleep. It is dangerous to go to sleep in church.

Somebody told a story once of a lady who had insomnia. She consumed all kinds of sleeping pills and medicine, to make her sleep. Finally she said, there is no use for me to take anymore medicine. Just take me to my pew in the church, I have slept there for 40 years. Probably that will help me. They took her to the church and just as soon as the preacher was well into his sermon, she fell asleep.

Too many Christians are asleep today. They join the church, are baptized, and are placed on the roll - but they have gone to sleep as far as any activity for Christ is concerned.

I think it is very sinful - here is a dying world, and you are half asleep. You need to wake up. If only you could see the judgement seat of Christ, and the nail-pierced hands reaching out. And hear him say I gave my life for Thee. And here you let my work go undone. Now we Christians may go to sleep on the job. But there is one thing, the Devil is always on the job. He never sleeps nor slumbers. He is always busy - always at work.

When this happened, down the outside stairway the crowd did pour. And they found this body semi-senseless. And Paul comes down and takes a look in V. 10. He says, do not trouble yourselves, his life is in him. V. 11. Therefore, when they returned back to the service again - Paul did not even permit the interlude in the communion service to be interrupted by one man who had fallen from grace. When they had restored him, they went back and finished the Lord's Supper. Then they enjoyed a wonderful time together in fellowship with the Lord and sharing each other's experience.

It was such a wonderful farewell service that Paul could not tear himself away. Though he had a long way to walk on the next day. The Bible says that he continued there until daybreak.

V. 12 - They were comforted. The young man was alive. And that this farewell service had been carried on in Christian love.

III. FAREWELL MESSAGE

In Paul's farewell message, V. 16,

V. 13 - We are told here why Paul chose this route. He sent others on a voyage of 40 miles while he cut across the neck of land about 25 miles. He walked alone. Perhaps for meditation and prayer. This was a habit of our Lord Jesus Christ.

V. 14 - Paul was trying to maintain a schedule. He had planned to arrive in Jerusalem for the passover. He had missed that, and so now he was trying to make it by the day of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit had first come to indwell the Christians

many years before. He wanted to be there with the disciples and celebrate that feast day of Pentecost. Paul never got away from his Jewish ancestry. He loved the people of Israel and he longed to reach them for Christ. In order to waste no time, we find in V. 17 - he sent for the elders and the Christians to come down and meet with him at Miletus. 15 miles from Ephesus. Paul felt that he didn't have the time to spare so he invited them to come up and he there gave his farewell message.

His farewell message can be well summarized into three categories. Personal testimony, a profound warning, and a precious compassion expressed.

1. Personal Testimony - V. 18-27

V. 18 - He talks about his personal life. He says my life has been an open book. And the trend of my life, it takes the hills and the valleys to make up a landscape. Paul says you have watched me for 3 years and under all conditions, you have known my life.

How many Christians could say tonight, look at my life - it is what a Christian life ought to be. Would you be willing tonight to stand up and say, look at my life. Probably most Christians would be forced to say - just look at the good days of my life. Don't look at the bad days of my life. Over your past life, would you be willing to stand up and say - just like Paul was saying here to these in this farewell address, and farewell message.

V. 19 - We have the message of humility. He had been serving the Lord with humility and many tears. And for a man of this nature, to be humble - it was something great. He speaks of his compassion - 3 years of tears. Not on account

of his personal sufferings. But for the perishing souls. Because of the enemies of Christ in the midst of the church.

The only man who ever wins for Christ is the man of compassion. Jesus wept over Jerusalem. Paul wept over Ephesus. John Knox wept over Scotland.

Three Times - V. 19 - Many T V. 21 WITH T V. 37 Wept Sore

Someone has said that our religion today is too dry-eyed. Paul sought not to know if they were rich or poor, but to know if they knew Christ as Saviour. The Bible says if we warn the lost, even though they die in their sins, we have cleared ourselves. If we do not warn them, and they die in their sins, then their blood is upon our hands.

The matter of sincerity is found in this verse.

V. 20 - From house to house, Paul went from house to house and he kept back nothing. The whole counsel with God, like the physician. He gave the people the medicine which they needed. It did not taste good. He may have had to use a knife to cut away some of the diseased portions. Even though it was painful, he said I went from house to house. Testifying.

The man who cannot weep over the enemies of the cross of Christ, fails to make full proof of his ministry. We can weep over our own sorrows and losses. But if we could get the interest that Paul had, this servant's heart was right. Phil. 3:18.

He was faithful - V. 21. He testified with repentance toward God and faith

toward the Lord Jesus Christ. This was that he delivered a message that was very neat - in two words: (repent and believe.) This is the beginning of the Christian life. We know that the Christian life is more than a single step. But the first step is repent. Think of the old ways of life. And then by faith and by trust, we begin to walk. Paul defines here the requirements. When he says, there is one Gospel. I have testified to both the Jews and the Greeks, and the Gentiles. And to the free men and to the slaves, and to those on Mars Hill. He proclaimed that this was the Gospel. In some circles today, we speak of the need of the Gospel. We say that we need something that will challenge the modern mind. As though the needs of modern men are different from those of other ages.

There has never been but one gospel. Nor will there ever be. For regardless of man's outward circumstances, his inward needs are the same.

By nature all men are sinners and need salvation from sin.

Charles Spurgeon said, we can learn nothing of the Gospel except by feeling its truth. There are some sciences that may be learned by the head, but the science of Christ crucified can only be learned by the heart.

I think this is how Paul expressed repentance and faith. Now from the Greek translation of repentance, we find it a change of mind or attitude. Still more, it is beyond an intellectual change. It is the will of the heart. It is more than remorse or godly sorrow. Therefore this word means more than just being regretful for our sins. As Judas, you remember, was involved in sin. There was no change in his heart. But he did not turn to Jesus, he went out and hanged himself.

Conviction comes when we repent toward God - that is unto God. With respect to God. You recognize that your sin is against God.

I think you could illustrate this with David's prayer of forgiveness in Psalm 51. Hear him as he prays, out of a broken heart. "I acknowledge my transgressions. And my sin is ever before me. Against thee and thee only have I sinned. And done this evil in thy sight." V. 3-4. This does not mean that he had not sinned against himself. Or against Bethsheba or against her husband. But David looks primarily about his sin as being against God. Of course he had sinned against himself, but what he had done was against God. So true repentance then sees that sin and what is done to God. Then this experience brings you to godly sorrow which will work repentance.

The other word Paul uses here in his testimony of the farewell address - is the word faith. It means to turn from sin. You must turn from the reliance upon yourself. Toward the Lord Jesus Christ. To believe is to commit. Or to trust. Actually, I guess it is all three. You exercise faith - you must believe the Gospel record, in what Jesus has done and he has done this for your salvation.

Faith is a gift of God. It is just as air is necessary to the lungs. You try to rescue a drowning man. The man cannot breathe - why, what is wrong. Is there not enough air in the universe, yes. But there is no room for air, and therefore there is no room for life, in his body. Faith is necessary for salvation. And we must make room for it in our lives.

As a witness, you and I are not to work up and develop a new Gospel. We

simply must declare the Gospel revealed in Jesus Christ. The old, old story, is not something we desert for something new. To do so, may please some men. It may get a crowd. But the story as told of a condemned man awaiting execution, many people had tried to win him to the Lord but they had failed. Finally one layman went in and said humbly that he would try. He said, my friend, you and I are in a bad fix, aren't we. Immediately the condemned man burst into tears. Then the man told him of Jesus and his love. And he was saved. That is the message - the message of repentance and simple faith.

V. 25 - Paul tells us that this was going to be his last sermon and he felt with certainty that this was going to be the last time that he would preach to these friends. So in giving them this farewell message, as preachers every Sunday should minister and preach as though it were their last sermon. We never know as we ascend the pulpit and announce our text, for it may be the last time that we preach. Therefore, a minister should not leave any wrong impressions. They should bring forth the truth of the Gospel. And seek for the conversion of the souls and the building up of the saints.

We had a pastor in Newport News just a few years ago. He ascended the pulpit, announced his text, and that was as far as he got with his message. So Paul felt that this would be the last message. The last time that he would testify.

V. 26 - He says, I want to put you on record that I have done my best. To preach to all men this message. And I have not declared to shun the whole counsel of God to you.

2. A profound warning - V. 28-31

Here in V. 28 - take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock. Here is a central fact concerning the church.

First, the flock. The name that is given to the church in the Old Testament. Isa. 40:11, 63:11, Micah 7:14. This is a name which Christ also applied to his disciples. Luke 12:32.

It was a favorite figure of the Apostle Peter.

Overseers - they were earthly shepherds. The Holy Spirit has put them in charge.

Third, they were precious. Why, it has been purchased with the blood of our Lord. "The church is the product of Christ Vicarious sacrifice. Other organizations exist among men. Scientific, commercial, and fraternal. The church is organized by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Had he not died, it never would have been. Of all the organizations on earth, there is none so precious as the church. The anthem of the church, in Heaven is, is Him that washed us in his own blood."

Our sins were laid on Christ - look what God did to him - He was wounded for our transgressions!
With his blood, his own blood.

So here we found profound warnings that is coming. Concerning the flock. The overseers that this is precious.

29-

^{church}
 Next, it will be assailed by enemies. For know this, he says, grievous
wolves enter in among you not sparing the flock. First, without, there will
 enter in worldly men. Outside influences, warning against the church. The
 duty of the shepherd and the flock is to be warned against the external - these
outside forces that are going to come because the church has been paid for with
 a price. He purchased it with his own blood. It is the ekklesia. The assembly,
 the called out ones. And it is a commercial term here - a transaction has taken
 place. He has purchased it himself. And what a price tag of that purpose -
 with his own blood. He made the purchase.

But the parall of it is, that grievous wolves are going to enter in among the
 flock. They are going to come without. Now it means that they are going to
 come some who will speak proverse things. And these wolves will come in to
persecute and also to provert the church.

You are to preserve these things because they will not spare the flock.

V. 30 - Within - also of your ownelves will arise men. To draw away disciples
 after them. The enemies that rise up within the church - this is the deadly kind.
 Those whose lives and beliefs and actions do not add to the healthy growth of
 the church.

For some of the professed members, such will arise. The greatest enemies of
 the church come from within because they are very destructive.

Dr. James L. Sullivan made a note on the democracy of the church. In this
 week's Herald. A very fine statement that men cannot within the church seek to
foster their own interests. They need prayerfully, co-operatively, with the spirit

of God to seek the mind of God.

The great danger that threatens the church of God today involves all of these. Within our churches, we have people who deny the infallibility of the Scriptures. The deity of Christ, the virgin birth, the blood atonement, the bodily resurrection. There are those who offer us today nothing more than a humanistic salvation. And they draw away disciples after them.

And they tear one away from that to which he has been attached. And it is tragic that maybe even some colleges and universities have been guilty of destroying faith. Whoe unto the teacher who would undermine the faith of a student - or even the preacher who would cause one to stumble.

V. 31 - Paul says what you can do. Therefore watch and remember. He says, I have talked about this, I have warned you everyone. Night and day with tears. Paul says I have given you my best work. I have put the things that need attention upon your heart. And he said, this is what you need to give attention too.

Finally, the precious compassion expressed - V. 32-38.

V. 32 - Build you up. My dear brethren, I commend you to God. To the word of his grace which is able to build you up. This is the prescription that Paul pronounces as he commends them to God's grace. Paul can only deposit them in God and in the word of his grace. And the word of his grace involved the preaching of the Gospel. Through the power of the spirit. And it was by this means, that Paul had been able to plant in their hearts, the Gospel message.

Build up - is an architectual term. Like a house that is built by a plan.

It may be by slow degrees, but it can be built up.

You don't throw a house together. You don't put it altogether in just one effort.
I Cor. 3:10, Eph. 2:20, Col. 2:7.

And he said, you are going to be built up into a holy fellowship. Sanctified ones. Those who believe in Christ. Now John saw them as a multitude which no man could number. As the bright Heavens were perfect and the inheritance to the sanctified ones. To sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob - and through all the ages. There will be an inheritance for the sanctified ones. To dwell with them not temporarily but forever. And they are going to sit down forever through the ages.

And another thing, in this verse 32 - is the word of his grace. By what power can men get into this holy fellowship. It originates in grace - the Gospel is able to build you up. The Gospel is no weak instrument. It is the power of God. Unto salvation.

35 Paul continues some personal things. V. 35 - He quotes our Lord Jesus Christ. It is more blessed to give than to receive. How we need to accept that great challenge. There is nothing like obeying the truth and being obedient unto it. There is nothing more precious to God in all the world than the people of Christ. The body of Christ. The most valuable thing on this earth. In God's sight is his church, as he gave himself for it. And Paul is exhorting them to watch out for these perils that will come. These wolves, and unregenerate men and women who will talk and act like Christians perhaps. And you will think they are Christians, but they are not born again. They will be religious but they will deny the power of faith. They will disturb, they will divide, and they will ruin the church of God.

He warns them that they will be also within. This is the danger again, and again - that people divide and separate. And form little cliques. Which gather around particular leaders instead of uniting people in the fellowship of the body. The church is no place for little special groups or for one man's views. These things disturb the church of God. And so he says, do all in the spirit that will exemplify. And with his tears, he had warned them of this. Remember that it is more blessed to give than to receive.

V. 36 - This is the final farewell. This is a most moving scene. Paul, the man of God, is down on his knees with his members around in prayer.

V. 37 - When he had said, Amen, all of them wept and put their arms around him. And they told him goodbye. Here is a man of God who loved them. Who told them of their sins. Who worked in their midst. Now he is giving them a farewell message. He told them that they would never see his face again. Their hearts were broken.

V. 38 - Soon he was on the ship.

When I consider this scene here, as Paul gets on the ship and finally departs - it is like your task and my task. Your opportunities and mine, will soon be passed. We will soon get on that ship. Paul had talked about, visited, and preached. He had been concerned about the word of God's grace. And now he had undergirded and supported - and he was on board the ship leaving - farewell. What a way to complete the third missionary journey. His farewell visit - his farewell service - his farewell message.

I wonder if you are the kind of example you ought to be. I remember reading about Phillips Brooks, in his church he had a man who had backslidden. This man

called on him one day, and said I'd like for you to take my name off of the church roll. Brooks reminded him that that was a serious mistake. He appealed to him to reconsider. Just then, a poorly clad boy stopped by the office with a note scribbled in pencil. It was on soiled paper. The minister read it. And it was addressed Mr. Brooks, my friend, and he turned to the man who asked for his name to be dropped. This is an appeal from a sick woman, she is poor. She wants a visit and needs help. I have a funeral to go to in a few minutes. Would you mind going home with this boy and see what the mother needs. And supply it for her. Certainly, he said - I'd be glad to do that. So the boy led the man through the narrow street and finally to the little shanty. And they passed through the half-open door that was held by one hinge. Into an unlighted room. The man stepped into the little hut, of disease and half-blind woman. She began to speak, oh Dr. Brooks, I knew you would come. You are God's man. You always come to the call of trouble. I am sick and hungry. But I want you first to pray for me. Please pray. Now this man had not prayed in years - what would he do. He hesitated. He thought. He tried to tell her who he was but she pleaded - oh pray for me first. Well, his heart would not let him refuse the request. For a moment, he dropped to his knees. The first sentence was a petition for his own back-slidden soul. The woman knew that this was not Dr. Brooks. But who it was, she could not imagine. Soon the ashes of indifference had been moved off. The altar by power, and the fire of devotion burned again. He sought the throne of grace for the distressed woman. And closed his prayer.

Addressing her, he said, my dear woman - you have discovered that I am not Dr. Brooks. I am the most worthless Christian in Boston. Dr. Brooks is conducting a funeral and sent me to help you. Oh, how you have helped me. What do you need. She told him that anything would be appreciated. There was no food, or fuel, or medicine. He asked the boy to accompany him. He went to the store, filled a basket, gave a boy this for his mother. Ordered groceries, medicine, and coal was sent. And charged it to himself.

And then he hurried back to the Pastor's study. Soon Brooks returned from the cemetery. The man stepped forward, his hand extended, his eyes were tearful. His voice was mellow. "Oh, Dr. Brooks, I don't want to be dropped from the roll. I am alright now sir. I am alright now." "

Paul Telling farewell, had done his Best -

Why not make some application of this truth to your own heart. If somehow, you had to say farewell to this world, could you say that you are alright."