

## Acts 20.1-38

### vv.1-6

Left Ephesus after things settled down (v's fleeing)

From Ephesus -> Macedonia -> Greece -> change of plans back through Macedonia (Philippi, Feast of Unleavened Bread) -> Troas

v.3 plot of the Jews – presumably to kill Paul on ship and throw overboard

### Recurring themes:

- Encouraging the churches
- Team ministry
- Keeping Jewish piety. Passover in Philippi, Pentecost in Jerusalem.
- God's purposes: destination Jerusalem -> Rome-> Spain

NB. Parallels with Jesus' setting his face for Jerusalem (Lk 9.51)

### vv.7-16

#### **Word-Table-Resurrection Miracle**

Gathered for Lord's Supper on Sunday (1<sup>st</sup> day of the week)

More comedy

Paul's long sermon/discussion

- in smoke+oil-filled room.
- Part 1 = c. sunset to midnight, part 2 = midnight to sunrise.

Eutychus ('fortunate', 'lucky') overcome by sleep, falls from a 3<sup>rd</sup> storey window, taken up dead.

Paul restores him to life. Cf.:

- Elijah & son of widow of Zarephath, 1 Kgs 17.19ff;
- Elisha & son of Shunammite woman, 2 Kgs 4.32f.)
- Acts 9 – Peter raises Dorcas/Tabitha

Paul went back up, broke bread (Lords Supper in context of meal), conversed until daybreak, and departed.

They took the youth away alive, and were not a little comforted.

Skipped Ephesus as hastening to get to Jerusalem by Pentecost (if possible), but given it was a 3 day walk (x2) didn't save any time. Probably avoiding a whole lot of other pastoral commitments and perhaps dangers too in Ephesus.

## vv. 17-38

Called elders (v.17), also referred to as pastors/shepherds (v.28a) and overseers (v.28b) from Ephesus to Miletus to give valedictory speech.

- Only recorded speech in Acts which is addressed to a Christian audience.  
All others =
  - evangelistic or
  - a legal defence (before Jewish or Roman authorities).

Parallels with Jesus' final speeches to his disciples:

- Task completed
- Prediction of sufferings
- warnings of denial/betrayal
- nature of leadership (as service, Luke 22.25-27)
- prayer for and appeal to unity (with Trinity and one another)

### A. His service to the Lord in Ephesus (vv.18b-21) : **CONSISTENCY**

- Lived among them the whole time in Asia
- With all humility (no regard for self, self-supporting, or humiliations?) and tears (see too v.31)
- With trials (from the plots of the Jews)
- Did not shrink from declaring anything that was profitable
- Taught in public and from house to house (same message)
- Testifying both to Jews and Greeks

- of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord JC

NB. Paul's emphasis on the consistency of his witness: over time (3 years), one place, through bad times (and good), in public and private, to Jew and Greek, whatever was helpful/necessary – always the same/constant.

### B. His current plans (vv.22-24): **OBEDIENCE**

- Going to Jerusalem (cf. Jesus' decision in Luke's Gospel – 9.51ff.)
- Constrained by the Spirit
- Not knowing what will happen to me there except that the HS testifies in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me
- Does not account his life of any value nor as precious to himself if only may finish the course and the ministry received from the Lord Jesus Cf. commission 9.15-16
  - To testify to the gospel of the grace of God... proclaiming the kingdom

C. His final/valedictory charge & handing over of leadership (vv. 25-32)

Summary: “**FEED AND PROTECT** selves and the flock”

- Knows none of them will see his face again
- I am innocent of the blood of you all (i.e. have finished my work among you, having done all called to do cf. 18.6; Ezek 33.1ff.; but now not simply issue of their salvation, but their ability to take over leadership – it’s now over to them, Paul’s prepared them as best he can)
  - I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God
- Pay careful attention to yourselves (essential pastors guard their own hearts, esp. prayer and Bible study: purity, possessions, power, and proud independence) and to *all* the flock, in which the HS has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood, i.e. the flock is not the shepherd’s but the Chief Shepherd’s, and is precious because bought with his blood).
- Fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock (cf. Matt 7.15; Jn 10.12). NB. sheep = absolutely helpless against wolves; only a good and vigilant shepherd can save them. Need to correct false teaching and expose false teachers (cf. Ezek 34.5)
- From among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them (cf. Rev 2.2 “... how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false”)
- Therefore, be alert, remembering that Paul, for 3 years, night and day did not cease to admonish every one with tears, i.e. Paul has set a vigorous and constant example of correcting error and identifying false teachers/wolves
- Commends them to God and the word of his grace – which is able to build them up and give them the inheritance among all those who are sanctified

Quote Richard Baxter, *The Reformed Pastor*

Oh then, let us hear these arguments of Christ, whenever we feel ourselves grow dull and careless:

‘Did I die for them, and wilt thou not look after them?’

Were they worth my blood and are they not worth thy labour?’

Did I come down from heaven to earth, to seek and to save that which was lost; and wilt thou not go to the next door or street or village to seek them?

How small is thy labour and condescension as to mine?

I debased myself to this, but it is thy honour to be so employed.

I have done and suffered so much for their salvation; and I was willing to make thee a co-worker with me, and wilt thou refuse that little that lieth upon thy hands?

D. Final defence (vv.33-35) **HIS EXAMPLE**

- Coveted no one's silver or gold. NB. love of money and plundering the flock often goes with false teaching/wolves!
- With his own hands covered his own necessities *and* those with him
- In all things has shown that by working hard in this way we must help the weak (= poor and those of lowly status), remembering Jesus' words "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (not in Gospels, so other Jesus tradition)

NB. Paul has modelled everything he has taught.

E. Farewell (vv.36-38) **LOVE**

- Knelt down and prayed with them all
- Much weeping on the part of all, embracing and kissing
- Dominant human emotion: sorrow wouldn't see his face again
- Accompanied him to the ship – not just presence but presents too, i.e. provisions. Shows have already learnt "more blessed to give..."