

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

AUGUST 16TH, 2026 // BOOK OF ACTS

ENCOURAGEMENT (ACTS 20:1–6)

“HE CAME TO GREECE AND STAYED THREE MONTHS”

Luke doesn't tell us much about the extensive ministry after Ephesus, but Paul gives more insight in two of his letters: 2 Corinthians and Romans.

- Paul wrote his letter to the Corinthians in response to the report he received from Titus while in Macedonia. From Macedonia, Paul went to Achaia (Greece), where he stayed in Corinth for three months and wrote Romans.

WHERE DO WE LOOK?

A key word that summarizes Paul's ministry is found twice in the first two verses: **encouragement**.

- We should be willing to encourage others around us, but if we need encouragement, we should not wait around for it to come from others. Instead, **we need to learn how to find our encouragement in the Lord.**

“THE JEWS PLOTTED AGAINST HIM”

Paul had to abandon his plans to sail from Corinth because he learned of a plot to kill him at sea. Instead, Paul went back by land with a group of disciples.

- These traveling companions were representatives of the different Gentile churches offering relief to the needy Christians in Jerusalem.

“WAITED FOR US...WE SAILED AWAY”

An additional traveler joined Paul who is not named in the list in verse 4, but he is indicated by the “us” used in verse 5 and the “we” used in verse 6.

- Luke had previously remained in Philippi (Acts 16:40) and rejoined Paul in sailing from Philippi to Troas, where they joined the others who had gone on ahead of them.

ASLEEP (ACTS 20:7–12)

“HE KEPT ON TALKING UNTIL MIDNIGHT”

This is the first example Luke mentions of Christians **gathering with one another on the first day of the week for fellowship and the Word.**

- Because he sensed he might never see this group of Christ followers again, and because he was departing the next day, **Paul preached to them for six hours.**

“HE FELL DOWN FROM THE THIRD STORY”

It could have been the late hour after a long day of work or reduced oxygen from the people and lamps, but Eutychus fought off sleep until it overtook him, and he fell out the window and died.

- Paul took a breath from preaching and went to bring the young man back to life. God worked in the same way He had through Elijah (1 Kings 17:21–22) and Elisha (2 Kings 4:34–35).

“DO THIS...IN REMEMBRANCE” (1 COR. 11:26)

Everyone was rejuvenated, so they went back upstairs and fellowshiped until dawn.

- Twice in this passage, Luke mentions a group of Christians gathering to **“break bread”** for **“breaking the bread”** (v. 7,11). Their example shows we should participate in Communion, but how often? Communion should always be **done in reverence, not in routine.**

PURPOSE (ACTS 20:13–24)

“PAUL HAD DECIDED TO SAIL PAST EPHEBUS”

Verses 13–16 tell us that Paul decided to travel by foot, catching up with the rest of the group as they sailed together from Assos to Miletus.

- Paul **desired to get relief to the Christians in Jerusalem by the Day of Pentecost**, and he knew a short visit was not possible in Ephesus

“SUMMONED THE ELDERS OF THE CHURCH”

Though Paul could not afford to spend extended time in Ephesus, he wanted to pour into the elders of the church there, so he had them join him in Miletus.

- We have seen Paul as an evangelist, sharing the gospel to bring people to Christ, but here in Acts 20, **we see Paul as a leader and shepherd of God's people.**

“SERVING THE LORD WITH ALL HUMILITY”

Paul started out by calling to himself as an example—**not an example instead of Jesus but an example of following Jesus.**

- Paul didn't just teach the easy topics and the ones that pleased him. **He proclaimed it all.** Paul didn't put limits on the message, nor did he put limits on the audience. **He proclaimed it to all.**

SPEAKING OF HIS FUTURE

Paul was not troubled by not knowing what awaited him in Jerusalem, except for the “chains and affliction” the Holy Spirit warned him about.

- Paul considered the cost (Lk. 14:28), and he deemed his own life to be of no value **compared to the value of taking the message of salvation to the world.**
- “Yet there used to be a gospel in the world which consisted of facts which Christians never questioned. There was once in the church a gospel which Believers hugged to their hearts as if it were their soul's life. There used to be a gospel in the world, which provoked enthusiasm and commanded sacrifice. Tens of thousands have met together to hear this gospel at peril of their lives. Men, to the teeth of tyrants, have proclaimed it, and have suffered the loss of all things, and gone to prison and to death for it, singing psalms all the while. **Is there not such a gospel remaining?”** (Charles Spurgeon)

FAREWELL (ACTS 20:25–38)

“THEREFORE...” (V. 26)

Paul had preached the gospel to them, but he was about to drop a bombshell on them by saying they would never see each other again.

- Since he would never see them again, he wanted them to know his conscience was clear in “declaring to [them] the whole plan of God,” and he spent one last time **encouraging and praying with them.**

LOOK OUT FOR YOURSELF AND GOD'S PEOPLE

Paul told the leaders of the church to watch out for themselves and for the flock God had appointed them to as shepherds, because savage wolves would come in.

- He warned that troubles would **come from within the flock**—that people within the church would **twist the truth.** They would **draw others away and to themselves.**

SAYING FAREWELL TO THE EPHESIAN LEADERS

Paul was not just a distant deliverer of doctrine; he was a man who **deeply loved his people, and they deeply loved him.**

- Because of their love and affection for one another, they were deeply grieved that they would not see Paul again on this side of eternity. Before Paul departed, they prayed, cried, and accompanied him to his ship.

“IN EVERY WAY I'VE SHOWN YOU...” (V. 35)

Paul showed by example that **he worked hard and sacrificed for the benefit of others and to the glory of God.**

- His parting words were from Jesus: **“It is more blessed to give than to receive.”** Not just leaders, but every Christian, should have a heart of sacrifice, looking at what we can give and not what we can get from others.

FINDING ENCOURAGEMENT IN THE LORD

- As imperfect people, we will fail to meet the expectations and needs of others.
- We must trust in the perfect God to meet our needs and encourage us when needed, then extend grace when He uses imperfect people to give us those things.
- We draw encouragement from knowing that **He is with us** (Isaiah 41:10).

ASLEEP

- Are we disinterested in the things of God?
- Are we bored with the Word after 45 minutes? What about 15 minutes? Do we sit down to read the Word and after a few minutes pick up our devices to scroll?
- Do we nod off when God's Word is proclaimed? What about other events (our kids' events, sports, streaming)?

AWAKE

- “Get up, sleeper, and rise up from the dead, and Christ will shine on you” (Ephesians 5:14).
- We are awakened by the power of God. When we are truly awake, the things of God can never be boring again.
- We have been awakened into a new life to walk in a new purpose (Romans 6:4).