

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

AUGUST 16TH, 2026 // THE BOOK OF ACTS

ENCOURAGEMENT (ACTS 20:1-12) AFTER THE UPROAR

After narrowly escaping personal harm during the riot in Ephesus, Paul took the time to send for the disciples and gave them words of encouragement before leaving to continue his journey toward Jerusalem.

- His goal was to continue to visit the churches he had planted in the past and encourage each one in their unique growth challenges.

TO GREECE AND BACK

Paul did exactly what he had hoped to do as he traveled to Greece.

- Local resistance kept him from sailing to Syria, so he went back through Macedonia until he reached Troas.
- Several prominent disciples joined him as he traveled, and somewhere along the way, Luke was added to the list of missionaries.

ASSEMBLED IN TROAS

Once they reunited in Troas, Luke shares that they gathered to "break bread."

- It seems that this was more than just a meal. Their meeting may have been unstructured and informal, but they would still remember what Christ had done through a time of communion.

"HE KEPT ON TALKING"

Luke doesn't give us the specifics of Paul's speech, but it must have been captivating.

- He spoke well into the night, and lamps were required to keep the room lit.
- The atmosphere was perfect for hearing the gospel and sharing what God had been doing throughout the region.

GREATLY COMFORTED

One young man was so captivated that he carelessly fell out of a window while attempting to stay awake, falling three floors to his death.

- Paul rushed outside, bent down over the boy, and declared, "He's alive."
- After this point, they had communion, then Paul continued to teach until dawn.
- The boy was alive, and everyone was comforted by what was said and what they had seen.

THE PAST (ACTS 20:13-21)

SAILING PAST EPHESUS

Luke and other disciples were rejoined by Paul on a ship sailing to Chios.

- They ended up in Miletus but didn't return to Ephesus.
- It seems Paul was focused on getting to Jerusalem before the Day of Pentecost, and a layover in Ephesus would have taken more time than he had available.

SUMMONING THE ELDERS

Even though Paul didn't have the time to engage in Ephesus, he did want to meet with the church leaders and share an important message.

- Paul had spent a great deal of time in Ephesus and had definitely been key in the discipleship of the church leaders in that area.

"FROM THE FIRST DAY"

Paul began his farewell speech by reminding them that he had been fully devoted to their discipleship from the day they met until the day he left Ephesus.

- **Disciples don't just share the gospel; they build relationships with Believers for the purpose of developing leaders in God's Church.**

SERVING THE LORD

Paul reveals his motive and source of strength during his times of teaching and the trials that came with being a voice for Christ.

- With humility and passion, he didn't hesitate to teach the truth to anyone, anywhere.
- It's important to notice that he went TO the people to share his faith in Christ.
- **Does our past reflect a faithfulness that can be built upon for today's and tomorrow's trials?**

THE FUTURE (ACTS 20:22-38)

"CHAINS AND AFFLICTIONS"

Paul knew where he was going and that trouble was coming.

- He revealed that the same Holy Spirit who had directed his path had warned him that chains and afflictions were in his future.
- **The Holy Spirit is our driving force and also knows what we may endure for the sake of the gospel.**

"THE GOSPEL OF GOD'S GRACE"

Whatever was coming for Paul, he knew he would stay focused on finishing the ministry he received from the Lord Jesus.

- The future wouldn't be about his trials or even his death; it would be about God's grace.
- **We may not be asked to die for the gospel. The question is: are we even living for the gospel of God's grace?**

"THE WHOLE PLAN OF GOD"

Because he had declared the whole plan of God to these leaders, Paul was confident in their salvation and ready to pass along the responsibility of discipleship after he left them one final message.

- **Paul didn't hold back in his desire to know God. He also didn't hold back when he taught God's Word. Are we holding something back? Why?**

HOLY SPIRIT APPOINTED

Luke reveals what kind of leaders Paul had summoned for this final farewell.

- They were overseers, chosen by God to shepherd His church.
- Paul made it clear that these men, like himself, may have been instrumental in planting the church, but it was God (Jesus Christ) who had purchased it with His own blood.

SAVAGE WOLVES

As overseers, Paul challenged them to be watchful of the savage wolves who would come to deceive the Believers in Ephesus.

- **We must remember that unbelievers aren't the only ones tempted by unbelief and lies. Even disciples can become victims of truth distortion.**

BE ON ALERT

Paul never stopped warning them about the dangers of false teaching. And now, it would be their responsibility to watch for heresy—even from their own ranks.

- **History shows that, in every generation, it has been all too easy for Christian leaders to attract others to their own way of thinking to satisfy a deep-seated need for approval or popularity.**
- **We must hold each other accountable!**

"I COMMIT YOU TO GOD"

Paul implied that even accountability was not enough to keep them from sin.

- God's promise of grace through the power of the Holy Spirit would sustain, grow, and protect the church.
- **Teaching and applying God's Word (obedience) is the beginning of our faithfulness to His truth and protection from our sinful desires.**

MORE BLESSED TO GIVE

In addition to the danger of false teaching and persecution, Paul recognized the possibility that elders might misuse their position for personal gain.

- Paul's attitude towards money and possessions reflected the attitude of Christ.
- **We need to stop coveting, work hard to provide for ourselves, and find the joy of giving away what we can't keep.**

PRAYERS AND TEARS

Paul's relationship with the Ephesian elders was one of genuine affection and friendship.

- Parting from him was distressing enough, but what grieved them most was that they would never see his face again.
- **Saying goodbye is always hard, even more so when it may be the last goodbye.**

RELATIONSHIPS

- People want relationships.
- **Relationships are hard!**
- **The foundation of a relationship plays a key role in the level of challenges it may present. Basing a relationship on temporary things generally leads to a very temporary relationship.**

DISCIPLESHIP

- Christian discipleship is based on Christ.
- **Ultimately, it's based on a *relationship* with Christ.**
- **When we build relationships with people based on our relationship with Christ, discipleship will be a product of them! But these relationships require humble intentionality, not a desire to satisfy personal agendas.**

PURPOSE

- What we need to find is purpose.
- **Agendas usually seek an end. Purpose tends to drive us to continue.**
- **ECC exists to make authentic disciples of Jesus Christ. We are disciples who make disciples, one relationship at a time. Are we being discipled? Do we want to be discipled? How are we teaching the next generation of Believers? Are we prepared to send them into the world? When will we stop holding back?**