

Encouraging One Another - Acts 20:1-16

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[0 : 00] Well, good morning. I pray that you are eager to worship the Lord today. I was grateful to wake up and see the liquid sunshine.

And it is a great day to be together. If you're a guest with us today, it is common for us here at 4th to take a book of the Bible and walk through and teach and preach through a book of the Bible.

Today we find ourselves in the book of Acts, and so we find ourselves in Acts chapter 20 today. And if you have a copy of God's word, if you want to turn there, and there is a copy also in the pew in front of you.

Acts chapter 20, we will be looking at shortly, verses 1 through 16. And I must admit to you, when I first looked at the passage, and by the way, I only have myself to blame in creating these units of thought to begin with.

So, but when I looked at the passage, I thought, now, what do you do with this? It's a travel log. It's Paul telling you he leaves Ephesus and he ends in Meletus.

[1 : 09] And so we should just say, Paul leaves Ephesus and he's gonna end today in Meletus. Let's pray and go home, because that's about all that's there is what I originally had thought.

But as I had the opportunity to look at this passage and consider some things, I became more and more excited for today's message.

But to understand this travel log of a passage, I want us to look at the overarching picture. And so if you will, I'm gonna begin the message just a little different, so we have some handles to hold on to, to categorize some things before we read the passage together.

In Acts chapter 20, look with me in verse one. We read this, after the uproar had ceased, and that speaking of the uproar at Ephesus, if you remember, they were all cheering from last week.

They were all saying, great is Artemis of Ephesus, and they had filled the arena or they filled the theater there that holds 24 to 50,000 people and they were cheering and they were persecuting two believers in particular.

[2 : 23] And Paul let the uproar quiet down, so that's what that's referring to in verse 20, continuing, verse one, or chapter 20, verse one, continuing, Paul sent for the disciples at Ephesus, and after encouraging them, he said farewell and departed to Macedonia.

So he's leaving Ephesus, he's intending to go to Macedonia. That's one part. Let's look at where our passage concludes.

For Paul had decided to sail verse 16, by the way, we're gonna conclude in verse 16. So Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he might not have to spend time in Asia for he was hastening to be in Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost.

So we have him leaving Ephesus, he's intending to go to Macedonia, but his ultimate goal and his ultimate destination is Jerusalem.

So that much we understand. To add a little complication though, look with me in verse, by the way, verses one through six take about a year, a year and a half.

[3 : 38] So it moves quickly from verse one to verse six, but that's about a year and a half of time that passes a year to a year and a half. But we pick up in verse six and we read this.

And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and in five days we came to them in Troas and we stayed there for seven days. So here's what I want you to see.

He's leaving Ephesus, he wants to go to Macedonia first. At some point in time, the ultimate destination is Jerusalem because he wants to spend Pentecost at Jerusalem.

But we learn at Troas, he's celebrated the days of unleavened bread. Now that is a celebration that occurs after Passover.

So Passover occurs, you have seven days of unleavened bread, that ceremony, then there's five days of travel to get to Troas, and then he stayed there seven days. Here's my point.

[4 : 40] If he wants to spend Pentecost in Jerusalem, and that's 50 days after Passover, that's if you will, seven weeks. He spends one week in the festival of Feast of Unleavened Bread.

He spends five days traveling, and then he spends seven days, he just ate up three weeks, and now from verse six, through the end of the passage in verse 16, he has four more weeks to get to Jerusalem.

So he is now near Ephesus, an Asia Minor, he's at Miletus at this point. He's at Miletus, and he has now four weeks to get to Jerusalem, and he will get there at Pentecost to celebrate Pentecost, and he will make it there in the next chapter.

But what I want you to see is verses one through six, it takes about a year, a year and a half, and then from verse six, through the end of verse 16, this passage is moving.

He's got four weeks to get there, and so he moves pretty quickly from that point forward. Okay, with that in the background, that's helpful for us to understand.

[5 : 48] Let's understand why he does what he does, and here's what I want to see. He's going to leave Ephesus down here.

He's going to, his ultimate goal is to get to Jerusalem, which would be around here, which I'm sorry, it's off the map. So, but he's at Ephesus.

His ultimate goal, he's going to end up in Jerusalem, but he wants to go to Macedonia, encourage the churches, and he's going to stop in Troas, and we're going to see that, but I want us to see this to begin with.

Verse 19, look at Acts chapter 19 verses 21 through 22, and this will help us give us some context for what we're doing, and then we'll get into the text a little more here. Chapter 19 verses 21 through 22.

Now, after these events, Paul resolved in his spirit to pass through Macedonia and Achaia. He's there in Ephesus, and he's resolved in his spirit to go to Macedonia and Achaia, and let's get Achaia here.

[6 : 48] So, here's Achaia, here's Macedonia. He has it in his spirit to do that, and he's in Ephesus when he says these things, and after I've been there, I must also see Rome, and having sent into Macedonia two helpers, Timothy and Erastus, he himself stayed in Asia for a while.

So, he sends Timothy and Erastus to Macedonia and to Achaia, and for what purpose? And we looked at this last week, but I want us to remind ourselves that in the backdrop of this is he wants to receive this offering to take to the church at Jerusalem because they're hurting.

So, he's gonna leave Ephesus, go to Macedonia, go to Achaia to receive this offering, and he sent two messengers ahead of him to prepare the churches to say, Paul is on his way, would you be preparing an offering for this church in Jerusalem?

And so, he sends these messengers, so they're already over there now. What I also want us to understand or see is this.

When you're in a historical narrative type of a book, like the book of Acts is, it's walking us through a narrative that's historical, and in this particular passage, it's kind of a travelogue, how do you find, how do you interpret the passage?

[8 : 08] What is the author trying to communicate to us that is the take home for us? And what is the principle that you can teach upon? What's the point?

One of the cues that you can do that with is to try to find a word that is repeated throughout the passage. Today, I want us to see otherwise it's just a travelogue. He leaves Ephesus, he ends up in Meletus, amen.

But there is something more that the author is communicating for us to help us understand the point of this passage. Look with me in chapter 20, verse 1.

I promise you we'll get into our text in a moment. I believe the word is encouragement. The point of the passage is Paul is looking to encourage the saints in Macedonia, in Achaia, in Greece.

And why do you say that, Scott? Well, look with me in verse 1. After the uproar ceased, Paul sent to the disciples and after encouraging them. I'll drop down to verse 2.

[9 : 18] When he had gone through the regions, he had given them much encouragement. He came to Greece. And then look with me in verse 11.

Paul, we're going to see in a moment, that Paul is going to, through the power of God, raise someone from the dead. In verse 11 it says, And when Paul had gone up and broken bread and eaten, he conversed with them long while until daybreak so that he departed.

Verse 12. And they took the youth, that is the gentleman who had passed away, who when they took him away alive and were not a little comforted.

Meaning, that's in the negative, but it's the same Greek root word there, that is encouragement, that we get encouragement from. And so it says, and they were very encouraged.

After they took this man away alive, they were very encouraged. That's the point. So that then provides the basis for our message today.

[10 : 22] Paul is leaving Ephesus. He's going to end in Meletus. He's going to go through the churches of Achaia and Macedonia.

And what is he doing? He's looking to encourage them. So now with that in the background, and that in the understanding in the backdrop, let's look at our text today.

Let's look at our text today. And let's look, and let's be reminded though, in Hebrews, if that's the point, how does the author of Hebrews use this thought of encouragement?

Look what he says. Why is Paul wanting to go through those regions? The author of Hebrews may be helpful. Watch out, brothers and sisters, so that there won't be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart that will turn away from the living God.

But encourage each other daily while it is called today so that none of you is hardened by sin's deception. What is this passage?

[11 : 36] Sometimes I think we minimize sin. Let's give an example. Let's assume I'm tempted to lie or deceive someone in some way.

And I'm reminded that no temptation has overcome you, that which is common to man, but with every temptation a way of escape is provided. But I don't take that. So I've already sinned by knowing what God's word has said, and I don't do it.

Because now I'm choosing now to lie. And let's assume it's some minor issue. It's not a big lie, it's just a small form of deceit. But let's assume I do that as well.

Now, if you will, in order to get to this point of lying, I've actually sinned twice, not only the lie itself, but not taking God at His word. And what is not taking God at His word?

Watch out, brother and sisters. So there won't be in you an evil, unbelieving heart. I didn't trust the Lord to take that way of escape that He provided for me when I was tempted to sin.

[12 : 39] And so that expressed a heart of unbelief toward the Lord. Second, I actually lied. I deceived. That is further expressing my heart of unbelief.

And the scripture says that heart of unbelief is actually called evil. And so he says, brothers and sisters, watch out for each other, that there not be in any of you an unbelieving heart.

So what are we to do? So then he says, encourage one another. Encourage one another toward that end. Daily, while it is called today.

So that one's, so that none of you is hardened by sin's deception. Okay, let's now look at the text.

I'm going to read verses one through 20. So Paul is encouraging the church at Achaia, Macedonia, and Asia in route to Jerusalem. And how does he do that? Well, let's look firstly at the text and then I'll share with our first answer to that.

[13 : 47] Verse one, after the uproar had ceased at Ephesus, Paul sent for the disciples, and after encouraging them, he said farewell and departed for Macedonia.

And when he had gone through the regions and had given them much encouragement, he came to Greece. By the way, you can just probably in your mind just say, that took a year.

That was two verses, but that's about a year. There he spent three months. And when a plot was made against him by the Jews, he was about to set sail for Syria, and he decided to return through Macedonia.

Sopater, the Berean, the son of Pyrrhus, according to him, accompanying him, sorry, and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus and Gaius of Derby and Timothy and the Asians and Tychicus and Trophimus, these went ahead and were waiting for us at Troas.

But we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and five days we came to them at Troas, and we stayed there for seven days. Okay. What is one way that Paul encourages the church?

[15 : 00] And look, he says, and after encouraging them at Ephesus, and then he goes through the regions in verse two, and he says, after he had given them much encouragement, he came to Greece.

So how did he encourage the churches through an opportunity to give financially to the Lord's work at Jerusalem? We looked at this a little bit last week, but I want to remind ourselves of this.

I don't want to pass over this too quickly. You say, well, how do we know that? Well, while he was in Corinth, which he will get to ultimately on this trip, while he was there, so we're looking a little bit into the future, he's writing to the church at Rome how the church had already given financially that he had passed through that region.

And he says, at present, however, I am going to Jerusalem bringing aid to the saints, so the collection has already been taken. Verse 26, For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make a contribution to the poor among the saints of Jerusalem.

For they were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them, for if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings, how ought they also to be of service to them in material blessings?

[16 : 15] So he's writing to the church at Rome. The churches have been taken up this great collection, and I've encouraged them to do so.

Writing, I'm going to say, from Macedonia before he gets to Corinth, though, he writes this about this offering that he has been receiving from the churches in Macedonia.

He says this, and he's writing ahead before he gets there to Corinth. He says, Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.

Each one must give, as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly, not under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. What is Paul writing about? He's writing about this gift that he is collecting to take to the church in Jerusalem.

So in the backdrop of our text today, is this knowledge that what is Paul doing? He's going throughout the region of Macedonia and Achaia, and he's receiving an offering.

[17 : 24] He's already sent two brothers while he was in Ephesus to prepare the churches for this. He's now collecting this offering to take it to the church in Jerusalem. Weeks ago in a worship service, I shared about how in approximately two years we are going to be sending Pastor Eric with some others from forth to plant a church.

And I am just so excited for that. I am beyond excited. But we don't have the details of the funding model roared out, but when we do, I can assuredly say this, I will be approaching you and I will be talking about money because the common mantra is, I don't mind coming to church, but that guy better not talk about money.

Well, I'm warning you. We're going to be talking about money. Because I'm going to, while Pastor Eric and others may physically be sent to participate in the church plant, all of us will be given the opportunity to participate in it financially.

All of us, I've already asked you, please be praying. All of us will participate in this prayerfully.

It will cost all of us. And I will allow you the opportunity to express who we trust and the posture of our hearts.

[18 : 56] Before we move on, I want to say, many of you know I recently returned from Israel. And upon my return, I met with Dale Canner, who serves as our bookkeeper, whom I am very grateful for.

She is very attentive to details and she keeps forth in compliance with all the laws of the land and ensures financial controls and accountability are in place with regard to our finances.

And I'm thankful for her. And when I got back, she, I asked to kind of get a feel for where we're at financially. What has happened while I've been away? What has transpired?

And I was so grateful to hear of your generosity that you give. And I'm grateful for your participation in the work of God here at Ford.

This past week, I'm grateful for Pastor Eric giving us a report of what occurred down in Colfax with the youth group. I'm grateful for Heather this week who will be departing who shared at children's camp and others to serve with her there.

[20 : 01] And Pastor Eric, the following week, will take the youth to youth camp back up to Riverview. So I want to just say thank you for your generosity forth and expressing to the Lord who you trust and where your heart is.

And you say, well, why do you make those links? Because the Lord Jesus said, for where your treasure is there, your heart will be also. So don't miss the point. Paul aims to bring encouragement.

And one of the ways he encourages them is to give to the Lord's work. That is so counterintuitive. So as I get older, and I'm not that old, but I find it meaningful to find ways to invest all that the Lord has entrusted to me.

It is encouraging me. It is encouraging to me to give to the Lord's work. In addition, it's...

When we talk about money, it confronts me and it asks me this question, where, Scott, is the allegiance of your heart? Where your treasure is, Scott?

[21 : 17] There, your heart will be also. And that is encouraging. Number two, not only does Paul encourage the churches in Achaia and Macedonia and Asia and route to Jerusalem through the opportunity to give financially to the Lord's work, but also through his presence, Paul's physical presence, his preaching and teaching, and letters to correct and letters to encourage.

When we see Paul leave, he's in Ephesus for about three years. And we know that he writes a letter to the church at Corinth that is painful.

And I want us to read 2 Corinthians. He says, I wrote to you out of much affliction and anguish of heart with many tears, not to cause you pain, but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you.

So while he's in Ephesus, he writes this letter to the church at Corinth, and there seems to be some tension there. They didn't receive it well. And because they didn't receive it well and it caused something in the relationship, Paul sends Titus to Corinth.

We know this from some other texts, and I'll be reading them to us to help us understand what's happening. Paul sends Titus to Corinth to teach and to bring him a report.

[22 : 34] Paul wants to know before he arrives at Corinth, how is the church doing? How did they receive my letter? And so let me share with you this image one more time.

While he's in Ephesus, he writes to the church at Corinth, and that's when he knows they received this letter in a painful way. It caused pain to them.

And so he says, I wrote to you because out of my abundant love, I didn't intend to cause you pain, but it's because of my abundant love for you. But he doesn't know necessarily how they have received that yet.

That was written later. And so as he's going to Macedonia, and by the way, this is why I think he went to Macedonia first, is he hasn't heard how the church in Achaia, Corinth specifically, has that relationship necessarily been smoothed over yet.

And so he's on his way to Macedonia, and he has this concern for this church at Corinth because he knows they've butted heads a little bit here.

[23 : 34] We know because we studied 1 Corinthians that 1 Corinthians cites another letter. So was it the letter that we don't have that Paul is referring to, or is it referring to 1 Corinthians? We don't know what letter it is that caused some tension in the relationship, but it caused, there's something that Paul wrote to them that caused it some tension.

So we learn in 2 Corinthians, he says, and when I came to Troas, so we know in our text that Paul wanted to go to Macedonia. We know because of Corinthians that he stopped in Troas, and let's listen to why.

When I came to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ, even though the door was open to me and the Lord, my spirit was not at rest because I did not find my brother Titus there.

So I took leave of them and went on to Macedonia. Notice what he's saying. On my way to Macedonia, I stopped at Troas, and my spirit was disrupted because I didn't find Titus.

Why? Titus had already gone to Corinth, and he was supposed to bring Paul a report. How is the church doing? Did they receive my other letter, perhaps, that I sent?

[24 : 44] Are they okay? Are we reconciled yet? Did they repent of their sin? He doesn't know.

And he's, and he didn't find Titus here, and so he presses on. And he went to Macedonia. And then we read this. For when we came into Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were afflicted at every turn, fighting without and fear within.

But God who comforts the downcasts comforted us by the coming of who, Titus. And not only by his coming, but also the comfort for which he was comforted by you.

And he told of us your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me, so I rejoiced still the more. Do you see what happened?

Somewhere in Macedonia, he and Titus met up, and he heard, so he's writing 2 Corinthians now, so he's writing to the church at Corinth, and he says, I was so encouraged, I was so comforted by you.

[25 : 53] Not only by Titus, but of the report that he brought to me about you, church at Corinth, of your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me. I rejoice still the more.

One more verse. For even I made it, for even if I made you grieve with my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it for, I see that the letter grieved you though only for a while.

As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved into repenting. Oh, church at Corinth, I was so comforted and encouraged by the report that Titus brought me while I was in Macedonia, because I heard that my letter caused you to grieve, and that grieve brought you to repentance, and I rejoice over your repentance and your reconciliation with the Lord.

And so Titus left Corinth, and he found Paul somewhere in Macedonia. They met up, and so somewhere in Macedonia, then Paul pins this letter that we're now reading, 2 Corinthians, and he must send it back down to Corinth before he, Paul, Paul will get down here to Corinth in a little bit.

And so he sends this letter on ahead of him to say, I am so encouraged by you, I look forward to it, and when we see each other, that'll be good and sweet. So now I want us to read verses one and two to see how fast Acts portrays this, but you all know now what's going on behind the scene.

[27 : 31] After the uproar ceased, Paul sent for the disciples and encouraged them and said farewell and departed for Macedonia. And when he had gone through the regions and had given them much encouragement, he came to Greece.

That took a year, and now he's with the church at Corinth, and he says, there in Greece, I propose he's there in Corinth, and he's spending the winter there.

I spent three months, verse three. He spends three months in the church at Corinth. Then things heat up and a plot against me from the Jews.

So he said, I was about ready to set sail for Syria. Now why on earth? Now Paul is down here, he spent three months there. He spent the winter there, and from there, remember his ultimate goal is to go to Jerusalem.

So he's got to go from there down here to Jerusalem, but he says, I'm gonna stop. I have purposed in my heart, I'm gonna go to Syria. Now why go to Syria?

[28 : 34] That's his home church. That's Antioch. He's gonna bring a report. Remember, after his first missionary journey, he came back to the church at Antioch, and he gave a report all that God had done.

And so now he's gonna say, oh, I've just had this wonderful second missionary trip. I'm gonna go back to Syria. I'm going ultimately to Jerusalem, and I'm gonna report all that God had done to the church at Antioch.

But he gets down to the boat dock, and he hears the water lapping on the boats. And at the bottom of verse 30, he says, I was about to set sail for Syria, but he decided to return to Macedonia.

Now you talk about not being convenient. Now, after the three months is done, he's got seven weeks to get to Jerusalem.

He's got seven weeks to get to Jerusalem, and he's thinking, you know what, actually, I think I'd like to go back up to Macedonia. And so the green line traces him back up into Macedonia.

[29 : 42] You talk about not being convenient. Ministry is not convenient. That is not a direct route to Jerusalem.

In case you were curious. And under the timeline, but he wants to further encourage the church in Macedonia. Let us remind ourselves, watch out, brothers and sisters, so that there won't be in you, any of you, an evil, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.

But encourage each other daily, while it is called the day, so that none of you is hardened by sin's deception. The third purpose for why I see Paul, what he's doing, he's encouraging the church in a cave in Macedonia.

Yes, he gives them an opportunity to give. Yes, in his presence, in his preaching, and his teaching, in the letters to correct, and the letters to encourage, he's writing. And by the way, could we just take a time out?

And would you do something this is going to get a little awkward? You can flash each other a little smile, a wink, or whatever. But if you could just look around the church. Just go ahead. You can look around, see who's around you.

[30 : 59] That's who you're responsible for. And notice who isn't here. That's who you're responsible for. Who could you encourage today?

Perhaps writing a little note. Chuck Swindoll, he's a pastor who I look up to. He's now, I think, 87 years old. I learned years ago that every day of his life, since he was in his 40s, he's written a letter or a card or a note to somebody.

He so believes in the written word to encourage others, that he purposes himself after he spends time with the Lord in the morning to write a note to someone that the Lord may bring to mind.

As you looked around and you saw brothers and sisters, you could encourage. I ask that you do so.

Third purpose that Paul has here is through a corporate gathering and the Lord's supper. Now we're going to read a little bit of an awkward section. I'm not going to read all of it.

[32 : 08] I'm just going to stop in verse 7, though, before we get into the rest of the story. So now he ends up in Troas, and on the first day of the week, when they had gathered to break bread, Paul talked with them, intending to depart the next day, and he prolonged his speech until midnight.

It's the first mention in the book of Acts that the church is gathering on the first day of the week, on Sunday. The church has gathered on Sunday, likely to commemorate it's the day the Lord raised from the dead.

It's the day of his resurrection, and they gathered to remind themselves of the gospel, to remind themselves of Jesus' life and his work, to offer salvation, that God, out of his deep love for humanity, condescended to earth in the person of Jesus.

He was born of a virgin whose name was Mary. He lived a sinless life. He offered himself a perfect sacrifice for sin, dying a death for that sin, and on the third day he rose from the dead, overcoming sin and death.

I find it interesting that in the midst of proclaiming the gospel, the sound goes out. He revealed himself to many, don't lose this, ascended into heaven where he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he continues to work, interceding on behalf of his people, and he will one day return to judge the saints, the wicked, and the dead.

[34 : 15] To enter into heaven, new heaven, new earth, for those who have trusted in him, who have trusted in his work, his sacrifice for sin, and be with him forevermore.

And this is what the Church has gathered for, to remind themselves of, throughout for millennia. One of the tangible ways we do that is receiving, here it's called, it says they broke bread.

In the first century, it would have been a big meal. And in that midst of that meal, they would have taken what we refer to as the Lord's Supper. Someone would have taken the bread and taken the wine and they would have received it in remembrance of the Lord's work.

Today, and we know this has occurred even from the very beginning, because we will remind ourselves in Acts chapter two, verse four, it says they devoted themselves to the apostles teaching to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

When the church meets, we remind ourselves of the Lord's person and his work. The Lord's Supper, communion, and some of you grew up in traditions that called that thing the Eucharist.

[35 : 33] The meeting is involved, let me just say this, they gathered to observe in part the preaching and teaching, but also the Lord's Supper.

And the aim was to celebrate the Lord's death and resurrection. We know this because they gathered on the first day of the week, that's the Lord's day of his resurrection. Secondly, they observed the Lord's Supper.

And we know that in 1 Corinthians 11, 26, it says for as often as you eat of the bread and you drink of the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. And concerning the Lord's Supper, let's consider one aspect of the Lord's Supper.

First of all, it's the privilege. Paul was able to remember Jesus' substitutionary death through the Lord's Supper with individuals who could not have been Christians for very long.

It may have been their first Lord's Supper. It must have been an encouraging experience to see former pagans take the bread and the cup. And what a joyous experience it would have been for those believers at Troas to take the bread, to take the cup with the apostle Paul, whom he had personally sacrificed much for the cause of the gospel.

[36 : 50] This joy reminds me of a story about John Patton. John Patton was a missionary from Scotland who lived in the 1800s. He sailed a ship down to Vanuatu in the South Pacific from Scotland.

And his trials and difficult seasons are well documented, but John Patton, he reported, he speaks of this unspeakable joy that he experienced when he served communion for the first time of the Aniwap people.

And this is what he says. For years we have toiled, we have prayed, we have taught for this. And at the moment when I put the bread and the wine in the hands once stained with the blood of cannibalism, but now stretched out to receive and partake the emblems and seals of the redeeming love, I had a foretaste of joy, of the glory that is well nigh, that is almost, broke my heart to pieces, for I shall never taste a deeper bliss till I gaze on the glorified face of Jesus himself.

Do you see what it meant for John Patton to celebrate the Lord's supper, communion with these believers for the very first time?

I pray when we receive communion, that tears pool in our eyes, and we are reminded of the privilege to memorialize the Lord's forgiveness in the act of receiving the communion.

[38 : 27] Each of us were dead in sin, unworthy to take the elements of communion, the bread and the wine, until God made us alive in Christ together. May we never get over the wonder of the gospel, the wonder of taking the bread and the cup together.

I rejoice in receiving the Lord's supper, and I never wanted to get old for me and for us as a church. And let us do this in remembrance of Christ until he comes.

And I want us to remind ourselves, watch out, brothers and sisters, so that there won't be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God, but encourage each other daily while it is called today, so that none of you is hardened by sin's deception.

Now we get to a unique part of the story in this travel log section that I will read right now. Starting in verse seven, we're gonna conclude in verse 12 and we're almost done.

On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together there at Troas to break bread, Paul spoke with them intending to depart the next day. And he prolonged his speech until midnight.

[39 : 42] So let's picture the scene before we get into the details. Paul's gonna leave the next day. It's been seven days here. He's on a timeline now. Now he's got four weeks to get to Jerusalem. He's gotta get going.

And so he knows he's gonna depart. And so from sundown until midnight, he's gonna preach. Why not preach a five hour sermon? Some of you should say thank you later today for not doing that.

So he pictures them from midnight. Something occurs at midnight. We'll pick that up at verse eight. There are many lamps in the upper room where we were gathered and a young man named Eudacus sitting at the window, sank into a deep sleep as Paul talked still longer.

And being overcome by sleep, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead. But Paul went down and bent over him and taking him up in his arms and said, do not be alarmed for his life is in him.

And when Paul had gone up and had broken bread and eaten and conversed with them a long while until daybreak, and so he departed. And they took the youth away alive and were not a little comforted.

[40 : 58] So Paul, let's capture the scene. Paul is preaching from, Paul is preaching from sundown till midnight.

And there's a man who is sitting and it says, why did this young man fall asleep? Number one, it's a five hour sermon. Number two, verse eight says, and there were many lamps in the upper room where they were gathered together.

Why that detail? Well, the lamp is burning, it's burning oil and it's getting warm. You've ever been in a room, it's an upper room, third story where it's starting to get warm and you get a little nauseous.

And sometimes as a young boy, I used to think this, I wanted to know everything as a young boy and I wanted, I had an avarice appetite to know things. Well, I've learned that every time you exhale, about 4% of what you exhale is carbon dioxide.

So I also have learned that the reason why you get tired in a room shared with many people in a closed environment, it gets warm, is because you're breathing less oxygen and more carbon dioxide from people.

[42 : 04] So you naturally start dozing off. That's the second reason. So, but I now as I get older, I wish I didn't know some things and here's why. I know in this room in modern construction, about 10% of the air is being recycled with outside air to reduce the opportunity for too much carbon dioxide to get introduced into this room.

Second, when there's a thousand parts per million of carbon dioxide that has sensors on the walls back there, the louvers and the dampeners open to bring in 100% of fresh air and eject the air that's in here so that you don't get tired from carbon dioxide.

Now you know. My point is this, if you start dozing off, it's not you. It's not the carbon dioxide, it's me. This is why I wish I didn't know so much stuff.

Regardless, this guy gets tired. He falls out dead. Third story, dead. Paul goes down with the power of God and he is able to raise this man from the dead.

Then Paul's not done. They go back up to the upper room for additional hours until daybreak, add on another six or seven hours, five, six, seven hours.

[43 : 30] And look at verse 12, and they took the youth alive and were not a little comforted. In other words, they were very encouraged. Why?

What's the story about with this young lad, Uticus, and don't you feel sorry for him? His falling asleep during a sermon was now memorialized forever in God's word.

But what's the point of this young man's story? Here's the point. What's Paul's purpose in traveling to Macedonia, Achaia, Asia, what's his purpose to encourage the saints?

And when the saints saw the powerful work of God in Uticus's life, he was raised from the dead, how could you not leave that service that day and think we serve a powerful God?

I am reminded of who the Lord is and I am very much encouraged today. We all would feel that way. And so never lose the opportunity to share a word of testimony of what God is doing.

[44 : 35] This last week, I learned of a man who is working hard to break an addiction. And the measures that he's going through, I'm like, amen, amen.

But it's God at work in his life. Another man confessed his sin to another brother who he had sinned against. Amen. I am so blessed to be a part of a church where the spirit of God is working and people's lives and they are responding to him.

That's encouraging. The last section, so let's not forget. It took him five days to travel to Troas.

He spent seven days here on his last day. Uticus falls out of the window and then he's about to make this travel down here. And let me, perhaps, no.

He's gonna go to Meletus and he's gonna go just past Ephesus. So now if you would read with me verses 13 through 16, we will conclude. But going ahead of the ship, we were to set sail for Asos, intending to take Paul aboard there.

[45 : 47] For so he had arranged in intending himself to go by land. But when he met us at Asos, he, we spent, I'm sorry, we took him on board and went to Medellin and sailing from there, we came the following day opposite of Chileus and the next day touched base in Samos and the day after we went to Meletus.

Okay, so there's the travel log. And he, for Paul, why did they go to Meletus though? For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus so that he might not have to spend time in Asia for he hastened to be in Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost.

Remember the riot in Ephesus? Remember the uproar in Ephesus? Remember them chanting in the theater? Great is Artemis of the Ephesians. Remember the threat he was under?

So instead of stirring all of that back up for the church at Ephesus, he sails past Ephesus and goes to Meletus. This sets us up for a wonderful message.

There's a beautiful moment of the church elders at Ephesus who meet Paul in Meletus. Next week, I don't want you to miss it.

[47 : 01] But let's take a pause for one second. What is the purpose? Paul travels leaving Ephesus, going through Macedonia, down to Corinth and Ikea, back up through Macedonia and now he's going, but just past Ephesus where he began.

And he made all of this trip to encourage the saints in the church, in the churches that he had planted and others. And so let us be reminded, and this time, would you read it with me as we conclude the message today?

Would you read this passage, Hebrews 3, 12 through 13? Watch out, brothers and sisters, so that there won't be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.

But encourage each other daily while it is called today so that none of you is hardened by sin's deception. Amen, let's pray.

Father, I pray that we would do just that. We would encourage each other daily. We thank you for your work on the cross and the gospel.

[48 : 11] I thank you that Paul encouraged the saints through giving them opportunity to give to the Lord's work, through preaching, through letter writing, through encouraging them, through his presence, through being with him.

And then thank you, Lord, that the church is encouraged by witnessing the work of God. May we constantly be giving testimony to who you are and what you've done.

May we take this seriously. May you burden us, put on our heart, who it is that we are to encourage daily. We love you, Lord. Thank you for a beautiful day to worship you together.

Amen.