

(Through the Bible) Acts 20-21

by Chuck Smith

In this sermon, Chuck Smith explores Paul's journey and teachings in Acts 20-21, emphasizing unity, humility, and the significance of miracles in the early church.

Duration: 1:26:05

Scripture: Acts 20:27-35

Topics: "Christian Stewardship", "Gods Grace"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of giving and supporting the weak, as taught in the New Testament. The speaker shares about a conference with worldwide distributors of Maranatha music, where they were amazed by the selfless giving and ministry they experienced. The sermon highlights the significance of encountering God and how it leads to a poverty of spirit. Nature testifies to the God of law, power, wisdom, beauty, and orderliness, but it does not testify to the gospel of grace, which is why God calls men to bear testimony of His grace. The sermon concludes with a heartfelt moment as the apostle Paul meets with the elders of the church of Ephesus, warning them to take care of the flock and expressing his sorrow at the likelihood of not seeing them again.

Transcript

Acts chapter 20. Last week we left Paul in Ephesus in the midst of a near riot in town as Demetrius the silversmith got together his companions in trade and pointed out how the preaching of Paul was about to put them out of business because these men made little likenesses of their goddess Diana and Paul was going around and telling everybody that they weren't true gods. So these silversmiths stirred up the city and they were gathered together in the arena crying great is Diana of the Ephesians.

Half the people didn't know what was going on but it was quite an uproar until finally the town clerk stood up and appeased the crowd telling Demetrius that there are courts of law if he has any real case against Paul and all to bring it before the courts and that it be settled in a lawful matter. The Roman government was in danger, they were in danger of being called by the Roman government to answer for that uproar at which they really had no good answer. So he had then dismissed that crowd of people that had gathered in the town square.

So chapter 20. And after the uproar ceased, Paul called unto him the disciples and embraced them and departed to Macedonia. Macedonia of course was the northern area of Greece.

Greece was divided after the death of Alexander the Great into four divisions. You had Greece, Macedonia, and then Syria and Egypt. So Paul rather than causing any further, he'd been in Ephesus for three years and his heart now is sort of stirring to go back to Jerusalem.

But when he goes back to Jerusalem he desires to take to the church in Jerusalem an offering from the Gentile churches. For the church in Jerusalem had become very poor and so Paul was seeking to show the brotherhood of Christianity and really the support of the, really he was trying to show the oneness of the body of Christ where there is neither Jew nor Greek. One member suffers, they all suffer.

So in Paul's Corinthian epistle he told them when they gathered together on the first day of the week that each man was to bring an offering as he purposed in his own heart. They should give willingly and not by pressure for God loved a cheerful giver. So Paul wanted now to go through Macedonia and Greece and collect these offerings that he had asked them to take up for the poor saints in Jerusalem.

In order as Paul returned to Jerusalem he could take the offerings for the poor brethren there from the Gentiles. So he embraced those from Ephesus and he sailed across again to Macedonia where of course was the church of Philippi and Thessalonica and Berea. And when he had gone over those parts and had given them much exhortation he came into Greece.

And he stayed there about three months and when he found out that the Jews were lying wait for him as he was about to sail into Syria he purposed to return through Macedonia. Now at that time it was the Feast of the Passover and Paul was probably wanting to get back to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. But thousands of Jews would come for the Feast of the Passover from all over.

And there would be many chartered type ships coming from Greece, from Athens, to go to Jerusalem. They would be filled with Jews coming for the feast. And Paul no doubt got wind of a plot to throw him overboard from one of these ships filled with Jewish pilgrims that were coming back for their holy days.

And so rather than getting on a ship and being thrown overboard in the middle of the night, Paul took the wise course and rather than coming by ship back to Syria to go to Jerusalem he went up then again through Macedonia. He went by land on up again to Macedonia. And evidently the churches there realized that there were real threats being made upon Paul's life.

And so there were several brethren from the different churches that accompanied Paul in order no doubt to afford him a certain amount of protection. So they accompanied him into Asia. Sopater of Berea and of the Thessalonians Aristarchus and Secundus.

And Gaius of Derbe. Now that's a different Gaius than the one of Corinth. And Timotheus of Derbe.

And that is the Timothy that we know. And of Asia there was Tychicus and Trophimus whom Paul mentions in some of his epistles as his companions. And these going before waited for them at Troas.

So these fellows went ahead across to Asia and waited there at Troas for Paul. And so we, the plural personal pronoun again showing that Luke is a companion of Paul once more. We sailed away from Philippi after the Days of Unleavened Bread.

And so that was the Feast of the Passover was now over because that was the Feast of Unleavened Bread. And we came to them in Troas in five days where we abode with them for seven days. Now the trip from Troas to Macedonia when Paul received his vision saw the man of Macedonia saying come over and

help us.

And immediately they got in the ship and sailed from Troas to Macedonia. That took them only two days. And so here a trip that had taken Paul only two days in the past took them five days this time.

Evidently sailing against the wind and probably under adverse circumstances. And it could be some very rough seas and all. And so they came to Troas where they stayed for seven days.

Now upon the first day of the week when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them ready to depart on the next day and he continued his speech until midnight. Now I've been accused of being long-winded but you haven't had to put up with anything like that. It is interesting for me to note that it records that they had gathered together on the first day of the week to break bread.

So often you will hear the Seventh-day Adventists or others such as Herbert W. Armstrong and all who believe in Sabbath day worship. You will hear them declare that worshiping on Sunday did not begin until Constantine and he was the one that introduced Sunday worship to the church. Not so.

There seems to be indications that the Gentile Church worshipped on Sunday almost from the beginning. Here we find the Gentile Church gathering together on Sunday the first day of the week to break bread. One of the early church fathers, Tertullian, said that in as much as Jesus rose on the first day of the week, they felt that that was the only day really in which the church should break bread.

I don't go along with Tertullian but it seems that as early as the time of Tertullian, which was before Constantine, that the first day of the week was already a common practice in the gathering of the church. Now it could be that there was a dispute over which day of the week you should worship the Lord in the early church because in two of Paul's epistles he makes mention of the fact that it really doesn't matter which day you worship the Lord. As he is writing to the Romans, he said, one man esteems one day, another man esteems another day.

Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. In other words, it really doesn't matter. Some people esteem one day above another.

Some esteem another day above another. You know, whatever, you know, pleases you. When the church in Jerusalem sent to the Gentile believers concerning their relationship to the law, they mentioned nothing about the observance of the Sabbath day.

In Exodus, when God gave the Sabbath day law, God said it was a special covenant between Him and Israel, even as was the right of circumcision a special covenant between God and Israel. But not something that was required of the Gentiles. When Paul was writing to the Colossian church, he said, don't let any man judge you in respect to the eating of meat or of Sabbath days or new moons or holy days, which were all just a shadow of things to come.

The real substance is Jesus. Therefore, Paul is saying that the Sabbath day was just a shadow. The Sabbath day was what? It was a day of rest where the people were to rest from their labor as a shadow of things to come.

The substance being Christ. What is he saying? He is saying what Paul or what the author of Hebrews said in chapter four, that Jesus is our rest. So the Sabbath day was only a shadow of Jesus who was coming, who has become the rest for his people.

And our rest is in Jesus Christ and in his finished work. So Paul said one day man esteems one day above another. Another man esteems every day alike.

Well, that's me. I esteem every day the Lord's day. And every day to me is I live unto the Lord, no matter if it be a Saturday, a Sunday, Friday or whatever.

I live every day unto the Lord. And so I esteem every day alike. Now, my wife doesn't appreciate that because it goes for birthdays and anniversaries, too.

She says I do that on hers, but I really want special perks on mine. But that's not so. We went to her favorite place to eat on my birthday.

So they gathered on the first day of the week. To break bread. That is to have communion and communion, it seems, was a very common practice in the early church, that reminder of the broken body of Jesus Christ and of his blood that was shed for our sins.

And it was a very common practice in the early church. They did it, it would seem, once a week at least. They did it not only though in church, but from house to house.

It was a it was a beautiful thing. Christians gather together, let's break bread together, you know, and it was just a beautiful thing. Now, they also had on a weekly basis what they called the love feast, in which they also took communion at the end.

The love feast was what we would call today a potluck dinner, where the church would gather together one day a week for these love feasts and everybody would bring something to add to the common table and they would all eat together and then would conclude it with the communion. This love feast was especially significant for the slaves because it was probably the only good meal they had all week long. But in the church there was neither bond nor free, you know, they were all one in Christ.

And so they had weekly these love feasts and and that beautiful fellowship. Now, there is a real value, I think, in eating together. There's just a closeness of communion.

I love potlucks and and I love the eating together. You've noticed how that when we go on tour to Israel together, how much closer we seem to to get to one another. And I think it's because we eat together all the time.

And there is something that just creates a closeness, a bond, eating together. And so the early church here gathered in Troas on the first day of the week. Paul preached until midnight and there were many lights in the upper chamber where they were gathered together.

And there sat in the window a certain young man named Eutychus being fallen into a deep sleep. Now, it could be that he had carbon monoxide poisoning. If he was sitting there in the window and there were all of these lights there, which, of course, were candles burning and and, you know, the carbon monoxide going from the burnt candles and probably going out the window.

And sitting there in the window with all that smoke curling out, it could be that he just really got deprived of the oxygen level. And he fell into a sleep, sunk down with sleep. And he fell down from the third loft.

Probably, now the windows there, of course, weren't glass windows. They were just openings, open windows. Sitting there in the window, he fell out the window into the patio below, three stories.

And he was taken up dead. And so Paul went down and fell on him and embracing him said, trouble not yourselves for his life is in him. So, again, a real miracle as God restored life to Eutychus.

It's interesting, Paul fell on him embracing him. There's an interesting story in the Old Testament of the prophet Elisha and the Shumanite woman whose son died. And Elisha actually did a pulmonary resuscitation kind of a thing.

He breathed into him and all. And doing it three times, the young boy revived. Now, that doesn't take away from the fact that there was a definite miracle of God.

And God brought life because you can, you know, if you take a person who has been dead as long as that kid had been dead. There's no way any resuscitation is going to bring him back. But the fact that he did that is interesting to me in as much as we have discovered today.

You know, this resuscitation and the cardiac arrest of things of this nature. I'm not suggesting that that's what Elisha did to the young man because this young man had been dead for hours and God brought him back to life. Here was Paul falling on him, embracing him much as Elisha did to the Shumanite woman's son.

So when he was therefore come up again and have broken bread and eaten, he continued to talk until the break of day. So, a slight distraction and yet Paul went on talking to them until daybreak. And they brought the young man alive and they were not a little comforted.

Now, I am certain that the Lord has allowed at times the miracles of bringing back a person to life. We know that this happened in the ministry of Jesus. We know that it happened with the ministry of Peter when he went and brought back to life through prayer Dorcas.

But I am also certain that the miracle of restoring life was never for the person but for the people around who were grieving because they were gone. Here it says, and they were much comforted. It didn't say that Eutychus was, but the people that were there were comforted by the fact that he was brought back to life.

And that miracle that God works in bringing a person back to life is really never for that person's benefit, but for the benefit of those that would be sorrowing. And I say that because if ever the Lord should see fit to take me and I am there reveling in his presence and suddenly I feel my spirit returning to my body and when my eyes flicker and I open them up and I see you with hands laid on me praying, Oh God, restore life to him. The first thing I'm going to do is bust you in the mouth.

We may pray that the Lord will restore a person's life for our benefit, but it surely doesn't benefit them. For to be absent from this body is to be present with the Lord. And so for the sake of the people, God performed this miracle on Eutychus.

And they were not a little comforted. I mean, they were really comforted. Actually, in the Orient, at death, they start shrieking.

And the women have a particularly shrill shriek at the time of death. And so when Eutychus fell out the window and they rushed down there and saw that he was dead, these Oriental women probably started their shrieking. And that's why Paul went down and said, Oh, hush, hush, hush, he's all right.

You know, his life is still in him. And as God restored life to Eutychus. And so we went before to ship and we sailed to Asos.

And there we intended to take in Paul, because he had decided to go by foot. Now from Troas to Asos is 20 miles by land and 30 miles by sea. You have to go around the Cape there.

And Paul wanted to walk. You know, I think that walking is one of the greatest ways to meditate. I think it's a tremendous way to sort of collect your thoughts.

When you have a decision to make, it's amazing how that in walking you can sort of sift things out. And I think that Paul just had a lot of things to sift out in his mind. And so he said, you guys go ahead and go on the boat.

I'll meet you over at Asos. I'll just walk. And so he walked that 20 miles as they went around by ship and met him then at Asos.

And when he met us at Asos, Luke evidently went in the ship. We took him in and we came to Mytilene and we sailed from there and came the next day over against Chios. And in the next day we arrived at Samos and we tarried at Troas.

And the next day we came to Miletus, which is about 30 miles from Ephesus. And from there they sent messengers up to Ephesus to tell the elders of the church of Ephesus to come down and meet Paul at Miletus because he was in a hurry. He didn't want to go all the way up to Ephesus and back because he desired to get to Jerusalem in time to participate in the feast of Pentecost.

So from Miletus they sent to Ephesus, called the elders of the church. And when they were come to him, he said unto them, you know that from the first day that I came to Asia, what manner of life I have lived among you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind and with many tears and trials which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews. Paul said, you know how that from the very first day when I came into Asia, the way I've lived among you.

For I have been serving the Lord with all humility of mind. Paul always saw himself as the servant of the Lord. And I think that that is an important mental attitude for everyone who is in the ministry to maintain.

I am a servant of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, everything that I do, I must do to the glory of God. I should not be doing anything for the glory of man.

But whatever I do, word or deed, do all to the glory of God. Not seeking to be a man pleaser, but seeking to please the Lord, knowing that of the Lord I am going to receive my rewards. And so Paul said, you know.

That my attitude the whole while I've been with you is one of a servant of the Lord, serving him in all humility of mind, the man who has received a true vision of the Lord is a man who has humility of mind. That man who is proud has not had a true encounter with God. No man can have a true encounter with God and still maintain a prideful position.

In seeing God, really seeing God, I see myself. And I realize how nothing I am. Isaiah said, In the year the king Uzziah died, I saw the Lord high and lifted up, sitting on the throne, and his glory filled the temple.

Then said I, Woe is me. Hey, that's always what a man says when he really sees God. Woe is me.

Peter, when he saw the Lord, said, Depart from me, Lord. I'm an unclean man. Daniel, as he talked about his vision and all, he said, Then my beauty was turned into corruption.

Seeing God is an important thing. Jesus said, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. But that poverty of spirit always comes to the man who has had a true encounter with a living, eternal God.

You cannot stand in the consciousness of the true and living God and still maintain that prideful state. And so I've been serving you, Paul said, with all humility of mind and with many tears and in real trials, tribulations, because the Jews were always lying in wait to ambush me. Paul said, And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you.

Paul gave himself for the people because he was serving the Lord. You see, as a minister of Jesus Christ, he requires that I be the servant of the body. Jesus said, If any of you would be cheap, then let him become the servant of all.

Talking about the ministry, talking to his disciples. So my serving the Lord involves my serving you. And Paul talks about his service to the men and the people there in Ephesus.

How I held back nothing that could benefit you or be a profit to you, but I have showed you and taught you publicly and from house to house. So both in the public gatherings there in the, where was it? We studied at the, that place in Ephesus where Paul was teaching was the truth. Come on, someone help me.

Tyrannus. Yes, very good. Get an A. The school of Tyrannus publicly, but then also from house to house.

Now notice Paul said I was showing you and teaching you. Sometimes the best lessons are object lessons. If our lives don't show it, the teaching becomes minute, meaningless.

And as a minister, I have to not just proclaim, I must live by it, showing you, demonstrating by my life, the lifestyle that I lived among you as well as teaching you. And so that faithful minister testifying both to the Jews, also to the Greeks, repentance towards God, faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. So Paul was preaching their repentance, necessity of repentance towards God and faith towards Jesus.

And now behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that are going to befall me there, except that the Holy Spirit is witnessing in every city saying that bonds and afflictions are waiting for me. Now, I really don't know what's going to happen to me when I get to Jerusalem. All I know is that I am to be bound and I'm to be imprisoned.

The spirit is warning me this everywhere I go, but none of these things disturb me. Neither count I my life dear unto myself so that I might finish my course with joy. My chief desire is to finish my course with joy.

It doesn't bother me that I have to be imprisoned. It doesn't move me that I'm going to be bound. My chief desire is just to finish my course.

So Paul's great drive to finish that course that God had set before him. He finally wrote to Timothy and he said, I have fought a good fight. I have finished the course.

That was his last epistle just before being beheaded by Nero. I fought a good fight. I finished the course.

Henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, our righteous judge shall give not only to me, but to all those who do love his appearing. It's just a shame that Paul didn't know the power of positive thinking and positive confession. He could have escaped an awful lot of things, but poor fellow, he was beheaded, suffering for Jesus' sake because he didn't know that it was God's will that no one should suffer.

That it's a lack of faith or commitment that anybody would suffer. Poor Paul. I trust you know that my tongue is in my cheek.

I love this. I love commitment. Give me some men who are stout-hearted men who will fight for the right they adore.

Start me with 10 who are stout-hearted men, and I'll soon give you 10,000 more. I love Paul. He was a stout-hearted man.

I mean, he was committed to a cause, the cause of Jesus Christ. And hey, nothing was going to detour him or deter him from finishing that course with joy. So, well, it's probably the last time I'll see you, but it doesn't bother me.

I know I'm going to be thrown in jail. Beyond that, I don't know. But I'm not worried by this, for I do not count my life dear unto myself.

What I really desire is just to finish my course with joy and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus. What is the ministry, Paul, you have received of the Lord Jesus? To testify the gospel of the grace of God. Testimony of the gospel of the grace of God.

What is the gospel of the grace of God? God loves you. No matter how badly you fail, no matter how deeply you have sunk into sin, God loves you. But God hates sin because He loves you.

And God knows what a destructive force sin is. And because God loves you so much, He doesn't like to see you being destroyed. And so He hates that which is destroying you.

God loves the sinner. God hates the sin because He loves the sinner. And He sees what sin is doing, the blighting, damning influence of sin on a person's life.

And so God hates the sin because He loves the sinner. And so God has made provision to free a person from that power of sin by sending Jesus Christ, His Son, who took our sins and died in our place. That by our believing in Him, we can be forgiven from whatever sins we may have ever committed.

And through faith in Him, can receive power over that bondage to corruption. And one day, as we are translated by the Spirit into His presence, we will be freed from even the presence of sin. So that is the gospel of the grace of God.

Not because I deserve it, not because I merit it, but just because God loves me. It was necessary that Paul should testify of the gospel of the grace of God because nature, though it reveals God to man, does not reveal the grace of God to man. There is no gospel of grace in nature.

Nature testifies to the God of law, to the God of power, to the God of wisdom, to the God who loves beauty, to the God of orderliness. But there's no testimony in nature to the gospel of the grace of God. And that is why God has called men to bear testimony of the gospel of the grace of God.

And this testimony began with Jesus Christ. For the law came by Moses, but grace and truth by Jesus Christ. And so Paul testifying the gospel of grace.

And now behold, I know that ye all among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God shall see my face no more. Now this is what Paul felt. He's talking out of his heart.

There are indications from some of the secular historians or early church historians that Paul did get to see those in Ephesus once again. The book of Acts leaves Paul sort of imprisoned in Rome, awaiting his trial before Nero. But according to church history, the early church historians, Paul's first appearance before Nero ended in an acquittal by Nero.

And that Paul was released for a time and just what happened during that period, we don't know for sure. There are stories that he came back to the church of Ephesus for a time and also stories that he went to Spain with the gospel. Secular history gives us something quite interesting.

You remember Jesus told his disciples that, you know, they're going to bring you before the judges and before magistrates and before the kings. And don't take any forethought what you're going to say in the hour that you're there. The Holy Spirit will give you the words to say, and it will give you an opportunity to witness.

Now Paul took this literally. Every time he was brought before a judge, a magistrate or a king, Paul took the opportunity to witness. And the higher up the guy was, the heavier Paul laid on the witness.

Because Paul, I think, always felt, man, if I could convert this guy. Wow. You know? And so when he finally got before King Agrippa, I mean, he was really pushing, pushing hard.

Agrippa, do you believe the scriptures? I know you believe the scriptures, you know? And, and he said, wait a minute, way back off, Paul, wait a minute, you know, trying to convert me. Paul said, oh, how I wish it. Because I'm sure that Paul, and we'll get to that in a few chapters now, Paul's defense was fabulous.

I mean, Paul really was pressing because he no doubt thought, wow, if Agrippa would just accept Jesus Christ, what an influence this could have. Well, imagine when he got to Nero, I imagine that Paul really pressed the claims of Jesus Christ on Nero like nothing we have ever heard. I'm certain that Paul thought, wow, if I could just win Nero to Jesus Christ.

Now, as you follow secular history, you will find that Nero wasn't such a bad guy in his early reign of the Roman Empire. He did some good things. But there came a time in Nero's life where he had almost a total personality change, where he became a beast.

In fact, that's what they called him in those days, the beast. It was as though he had a total change of personality, like a man who was almost demon possessed. And if you will study the secular history, you will find that this dramatic change came in Nero just about the time that Paul witnessed to him.

I believe what happened is that Paul did lay on such a heavy witness to Nero that it was a now or never situation for Nero's salvation. And in turning his back upon the gospel, I believe he became possessed by an evil spirit. And that is why he became such a beast.

He released Paul on the first trial, but soon called Paul back from Ephesus and beheaded him as he turned into that beast. So Paul is saying, I don't think I'm going to see you again. It seems that maybe he

did get to see them again.

Wherefore, I call you to record this day that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Paul felt it very important that he be upfront with people as far as the gospel is concerned, to declare the truth, the whole counsel of God to man so that he would not be accountable for them.

I'm free from the blood of all men because I haven't shunned to tell you everything, the whole counsel of God. Now take heed therefore unto yourselves and unto the flock over which the Holy Spirit has made you the overseers that you feed the church of God, which he has purchased with his own blood. And this is the charge and the responsibility that God has placed upon the ministers to feed the flock of God.

But it is so difficult to find pastors today who will really feed the flock of God. We get letters by the hundreds. The other night when I was in Indianapolis, scores of people afterwards said to me, would you please start a work here in Indianapolis? We've been praying for five years that God would establish a Calvary Chapel here in Indianapolis.

We want a place where we can just go and be fed the word of God. People are hungry to be fed the word of God. And so Paul said to these overseers of the church at Ephesus, feed the flock of God.

Peter in writing his epistles said, feed the flock of God, which is among you. Jesus said to Peter, feed my sheep. I don't know why pastors don't realize that this is the most important function of a pastor is to feed the flock of God.

We have those who are seeking to entertain the flock of God. And then God help us. Unfortunately, we have those who are seeking to fleece the flock of God.

But how few are really feeding the flock of God. Also of your own selves. For I know this, the reason why they feed them is that they might become strong.

Because wolves are going to come in. After I depart, grievous wolves are going to enter in among you, not sparing the flock. False doctrines that will come in.

Weird concepts and ideas. Men who have tried to draw groups after themselves. There's always that.

God establishes a work. And then there are always those who try and come in. Even out of your own midst, there will come those that will try and break off a group to bring them as after themselves.

Sad and tragic. Paul, when he was writing to the Ephesians, said that God is placed in the church. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastor teachers for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry.

That's what we're here for. That you might be fed the word of God, that you might be perfected for the work of the ministry, the building up of the body of Christ until we all come into the unity of the faith of the knowledge of the son of God into that complete person under the measure of the stature, the fullness of the image of Christ, that you be no more as babes who are tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine and slight cunning of men who lie in wait to deceive the greatest burden on the heart of Paul, the greatest grief and sorrow were those men who would come in to pray upon the flock of God, to draw men after themselves. And so Paul said to these Ephesians, I know that after I depart, there are going to be grievous

wolves that are going to air in, not sparing the flock.

Also, out of your own midst shall men arise who will be speaking perverse things, not really teaching the word of God, teaching the concepts of man who tried to draw disciples after them. Therefore, watch and remember that by the space of three years, I cease not to warn every one of you night and day with tears. Doesn't make any difference.

There are always those foolish little sheep that it will go traipsing after any bell. And though Paul warned them for three years, night and day with tears that, hey, get sound in the word, get founded in the word. Yet I know that, you know, they're going to rip some of you off.

And now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all them that are set apart by God. I commend you to God and the word of his grace. Oh, it's that which is able to build you up and bring us into that glorious inheritance.

I have coveted no man's silver or gold or apparel. Oh, God, give us more Paul's. Yea, ye yourselves know that these hands have ministered unto my necessities and to them that were with me.

Hey, fellas, you see the calluses. I worked with my own hands. I took care of myself and those that were with me.

I, you know, I earned our living. I didn't covet your silver or gold or your apparel. I wasn't here to rip you off or to fleece you.

I was here to minister and to feed you. Now, he was telling them that because those false prophets are always seeking to fleece the sheep. Always some new gimmick to take a second offering or a third offering.

Always the emphasis upon your giving to God rather than what God has given to you. Watch that one who is constantly emphasizing what you ought to be giving to God. The New Testament emphasizes what God has given to you.

I have showed you all things, how that so laboring you ought to support the weak and to remember the words of our Lord Jesus, who said, it's more blessed to give than to receive. We just completed a conference with the worldwide distributors of Maranatha music. They've come in from all over the world, Africa, Singapore, Philippines, Hong Kong, Europe, distributors of Maranatha music.

We had a farewell luncheon with them Friday, in which these distributors got up and just sort of expressed themselves concerning the conference that they just had. And they said, you know, been at a lot of conferences, but never one like this. It seems that all the conferences we go to, they're always trying to get something from us.

But when we came here, you've been ministering to us. It's like you're giving and trying to give to us rather than taking from us. And I said, you have just stumbled on to the philosophy of Calvary Chapel.

We exist to minister to people, not to be ministered to by people. That's our basic philosophy. We're here to give, not to receive.

And that is why there is never an emphasis upon your giving. The emphasis is always upon what God has given to us. And we are here to give to you in the name of Jesus Christ.

And it is so blessed to be able to go on the radio all over the United States, not to be ministered to by the people. Now, friends, please send in your offering this week. Because if we don't hear from you this week, we're so far behind in our bills, you know, and we've got to hear from you this week.

Never, never, never. We are just there to minister God's Word to the people all over the country to give. And thus we send out the literature.

We give away thousands upon thousands of tapes every year. Get the Word out. We give away music albums.

Get the music out. Get the Word out. People write and say, can we duplicate your tapes? And we say, yes.

I read in Christianity Today, someone wrote a letter into Christianity Today, and they told how that they have problems. Their church was wanting to sing choruses. And so how they found out that they couldn't copy choruses on a little chorus sheet without infringing on the copyrights of those choruses.

And so they wanted to print up these chorus sheets for their church, and they sent to all of the publishers asking for permission, and they all demanded a royalty. Just for these little, you know, mimeographs, chorus sheets for the church. He said there was only one publisher who told us just go ahead, use it freely.

He said it was Maranatha Music. And I said, praise God to give. Paul said, you know, our Lord told us it's more blessed to give than to receive.

Now, if we take that philosophy, God takes care of us. God takes care of the church. He more than supplies for our needs, but we'd never have to emphasize that side of it.

God takes care of that side. Jesus said, if you seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, all these other things will be added to you. But these poor, unfortunate pastors who are striving to attain find themselves trapped, because if you strive to attain, then you have to strive to maintain what you have attained.

And you get in that position of constant pressure, constant striving. Now, what new gimmick can we include in our letter this week, you know, to get the people to send more bucks to us, you know. You get in that trap and it seems there's no way out.

If we would only learn, Jesus has established the principle, it's more blessed to give than to receive. And if we give freely, even as we have received freely, God will take care of our needs as he has proved. I believe that he has chosen to use Calvary Chapel more or less as an example of what God can and will do if we just follow his principles.

And all over people look to us and say, well, Calvary Chapel is different. Sure it is. A whole different philosophy.

We are here to minister rather than to be ministered to. We're here to give rather than to receive. And God takes care of the needs, more than takes care of the needs.

He so blesses that we're able to sponsor the word for day to day all over the world. He is so good. When will people learn? And when he had thus spoken, he knelt down and prayed with them all.

I can picture on the beach, Paul the Apostle, the ship is waiting offshore. There's a little dinghy there. And here are the elders of the church of Ephesus.

And Paul's sitting on the beach there with them. And he's talking to them and saying, hey, now feed the flock of God. Just take care of them because wolves are going to come in.

And, you know, I've warned you this with tears. I'm sure that Paul was crying now. And he said, you know, watch over them.

It's more blessed to give than to receive. And then I can see this circle of men kneeling as they join hands in prayer, not knowing what the future holds. And they all of them began to weep.

And they fell on Paul's neck and they kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake that they would probably not see his face again. And they accompanied him onto the ship. And so it came to pass that after we had gotten from them and we had launched, we came with a straight course and to Kuz and the following day into Rhodes and from there to Potara, where we found a ship that was sailing to Phoenicia.

And we got on board and we set forth. And when we had sighted the island of Cyprus, we went on the left hand side and sailed into Syria and we landed at Tyre for there. The ship was to unload her burden.

So Luke takes us now on the journey from Miletus on to the city of Tyre, which you read so much about in your papers today. They're in southern Lebanon, where the Israelis now have occupational troops and finding disciples. The Greek would indicate that they look for them.

They search for them and found them. You know, it's a glorious thing being a Christian, because no matter where you go in the world, the minute you find disciples, you're at home. It's such a wonderful feeling.

I go back to Indianapolis and it's just like being at home. We gathered together there in the auditorium and it was just like being home. The love and all with which the people received us and just, hey, we're all part of God's glorious body.

And that was true in New York. It's true in New Jersey. It's true in Colorado Springs.

It's true wherever we go. It's just like being with the family. And so they search for the Christian body there in Tyre.

They found them and they stayed with them for seven days, who said to Paul through the spirit that he should not go up to Jerusalem. And when we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way. And they all brought us on our way with the wives and the children till we're out of the city.

So this Christian body in Tyre, all of the wise kids, and I got another picture, you know, of them coming with Paul until they come to the city limits. And we kneeled down on the shore and prayed. So all of the children, the families, the body of Christ, they're in Tyre kneeling with Paul.

They're on the beach at Tyre praying. And so when we had taken our leave of one another, we went into the ship and we returned and they returned home again. And when we had finished our course from Tyre, we came to Ptolemaeus, which is the modern port city of Akko.

And there we greeted the brethren and stayed with them for a day. And the next day, we that were of Paul's company departed and came to Caesarea, about twenty-five miles south from Akko on the Mediterranean coast. And we entered into the house of Philip the Evangelist, which was one of the seven that is deacons appointed in the early church to administer the tables.

And we stayed with him. And he had four daughters who were virgins and who had the gift of prophecy. Now, it is interesting, this is twenty years after Philip fled from Jerusalem because of Paul's intense persecution of the church at the time of the stoning of Stephen, where Paul stood and held the coats consenting or voting for Stephen's death.

And then how Paul went out to wreck the church, imprisoning those that called upon the Lord and all. And at Paul's heavy persecution, Philip had fled from Jerusalem, went up to Samaria, where a great revival broke out, then headed by the guidance of the Spirit down to Gaza, where the Ethiopian eunuch was converted, and then made his way back towards Caesarea, preaching in various cities, sharing the truth of Jesus Christ, but finally settled in Caesarea. Now these two men meet twenty years later, no longer on opposite sides of the fence, and now brought together as brothers in Jesus Christ.

And Paul stayed there at the house of Philip, for Philip had settled now in Caesarea, had a family, four daughters, God's anointing upon them. They had the gift of prophecy. You know, time does go by and people do grow up and mature.

And a lot of people say, well, where are the Jesus people, you know? Well, they're here, but they have four kids. You know, time changes things. They're no longer the irresponsible teenagers who were in their early twenties as they were, but now they're in their thirties.

Some of them in late thirties. But yet, having matured, grown, times change. You know, nothing is static.

That was not intended, but it's true, everything passes. But when we get into heaven, all you fellows might be the same, because the Bible says there's no parting there. So they stayed there for many days, and there came down from Judea a certain prophet named Agabus.

Now, he had earlier been the prophet who had come to Antioch and had prophesied the great drought that would come. And when he was coming to us, he took Paul's girdle and he bound his own hands and feet and said, thus saith the Holy Spirit, so shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owns this girdle and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. And when we heard these things, both we and those of that place begged him not to go up to Jerusalem.

Then Paul answered, what do you mean by this weeping? You're trying to break my heart. For I am ready not to be bound only, but I'm also ready to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. You're trying to persuade me by tears.

Hey, fellas, I'm not afraid of being bound. I'm ready to die for the Lord Jesus. Now, was it the will of the Lord that Paul go to Jerusalem? When he was there at Tyre, the Spirit warned him not to go to Jerusalem.

Here the Holy Spirit, you know, Agabus takes Paul's girdle, binds his hand and feet, and he said, thus the man who owns this girdle is to be bound in Jerusalem, turned over to the Gentiles. I believe that the Lord was just warning Paul what was going to await him. And the disciples interpreted the warning as that he wasn't to go.

But I believe that Paul was to go to Jerusalem. Their interpretation of the warnings was don't go. But you remember when Paul was first converted, that the Lord told Ananias there in Damascus, go to the street straight and inquire for Paul and lay hands on him that he might receive his sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

And he said, Lord, you've got to be kidding. I know this guy, Paul. I've heard of him.

He's the one who wrecked the church in Jerusalem, throwing in prison all the Christians. And he's come here and my name is on his list. I'm on his hit list.

I'm one of the guys he's going to arrest. Lord, you can't mean that I'm supposed to go and expose myself to this guy and pray for him. The Lord said, behold, he is a chosen vessel unto me and I am going to show him the things that he's going to suffer for my name.

Now, it seems that the Lord was faithful to that and always warned Paul in advance of the sufferings that he was going to experience. And with the warnings, I think there was always, hey, Paul, if you want to duck out, you can. Paul said, hey, no way, Lord, let's go for it.

I'm not worried about being in prison. I'm not worried about being bound. You know, you can't dissuade me by your tears.

I'm ready to die for Jesus. Being thrown in jail doesn't bother me at all. I'm ready to die for Jesus Christ.

You just don't stop men like that. You remember when he was at Corinth, the Lord said, preach boldly. No one will be able to lay their hands on you here to hurt you because I have many people in this city.

When he was on the ship and it looked like there was going to be a shipwreck. We'll get that in a couple chapters. And Paul stood up and he said, hey, fellas, be a good cheer.

Everything's going to be all right. An angel of the Lord stood by me and told me that though the ship is going to be wrecked, not a life is going to be lost. But the Lord was always showing him the things that were going to transpire, the things that he'd have to suffer.

And I believe the Lord was just faithful, showing Paul the things that he was going to suffer for the cause of Jesus Christ. But Paul, hey, Lord, whatever. I'm ready to be bound.

I'm ready to die. As I told you this morning, Paul is one of my real favorites. I love commitment.

I love that that competitive desire to win. And the guy that's, hey, not going to be stopped by pain or a little hurt or whatever. Let's go for it.

And I love that kind of. Man, he's just my kind of guy and I just really admire him. And so when he would not be persuaded, we ceased.

Now, it isn't we see saying the Lord's will be done. We just ceased saying don't go. And we just started saying, well, the Lord's will be done.

A lot of people read that wrong. We see saying the Lord's will be done. No, we ceased and we said, well, the Lord's will be done.

You see the difference? They recognize them. Well, if that's what the will of the Lord is, so be it. You know, the Lord's will be done.

So we ceased trying to dissuade Paul as we said, well, the will of the Lord be done. And so after those days, we took up our carriages. Now, that's an old English word for luggage.

We grabbed our suitcases and they didn't carry, he didn't go on a carriage to Jerusalem. They walked and we went up to Jerusalem. And there went with us also certain of the disciples from Caesarea.

And they brought with them one Mason of Cyprus, an old disciple with whom we should lodge. And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. And on the following day, Paul went in with us unto James and all of the elders were present.

And when they agreed to them, he declared particularly the things that the Lord had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry. And when they heard it, they praised the Lord and they said unto him, now, brother Paul, you see how many myriads of Jews there are, which are believers here and they are all zealous of the law. Interesting.

By this time in Jerusalem, there were thousands of Christians who had a strange admixture of Christianity with Judaism. They are zealous of the law. They were continuing in the rights of Judaism.

They were continuing in the law of Moses, though they did believe that Jesus was the Messiah, but they had accommodated themselves to the Jewish community. And so he said, now they have been informed about you, that you are teaching all the Jews, which are among the Gentiles, to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs. Now, what is it there for? You see, the multitude, when they come together, they're going to have to find out about you because they're going to hear that you've come here.

Now, this is what we like you to do. We have four men which have a vow on them. So take them and purify yourself with them and take care of their expenses, that they may shave their heads and that all may know those things where they were informed about you are really nothing but you yourself are a good Jewish boy living kosher, that you are walking orderly, keeping the law.

So the church in Jerusalem was trying to keep from having an uproar. There were many Jews who had become believers, though they kept the Judaic law and they continued as Jews, but they did believe. But the church in Jerusalem was definitely in a weakened state.

Whenever the church seems to adapt itself, seeks to adapt itself to the society around it, the church always finds itself in a weakened state. One of the great curses of the church is its endeavor to adapt itself to the world, that we might live in peace and harmony with the world. But Jesus is such that there can be no mutual coexistence with sin.

Jesus, the word of God tells us, come ye apart from them, be ye separate, saith the Lord. Touch not the unclean thing and I will be a father unto you and you shall be my sons and daughters. But the Lord calls for a real separation, a real commitment.

Don't want any trouble, Paul. Now they've heard that you've been teaching some things that, you know, the Jews don't have to worry about the law and all, to just go ahead and serve Jesus Christ. But hey, do us a favor now, we don't want any trouble.

All of these Jews are going to hear that you've come here and, you know, things are likely to get a little sticky. So there are these four young fellows and they've come for the feast. And so they want to take a vow.

Now, in taking the vow, you had to go a whole week just in dedication to the Lord. It was a Nazarite vow. You shave your head and you then at the end of the period of time, you shave your head again and you bring the hair and burn it as a sacrifice.

And they got into its consecration and they were supposed to take one week off and just spend the week in the temple worshiping God. Now, they had a hard time taking the week off because of needing supplies. And so they often had wealthy people who would sponsor them.

And so they said to Paul, look, sponsor these four guys. Now, Paul had brought a good offering to the church in Jerusalem. It's interesting, there's no mention of any thanks for it.

There's just an endeavor to really compromise Paul to his own convictions. Now, Paul, I admire here his greatness because he went ahead and did it. And I'm sure he did it just to follow his own exhortation in Romans to live peaceably with all men as much as lieth in you.

Hey, come here to me and it's going to help you guys fine. I mean, it shows the greatness of the guy. It shows the graciousness of Paul.

That he would go along with this suggestion, but it wasn't in his heart. You know, he was free from these things. He had discovered the grace of God.

That's one thing the church in Jerusalem had not really discovered. They were still trying to please God by adherence to the law rather than attaining to that righteousness, which is by faith in Jesus Christ, of which Paul wrote to the Romans. And he said, what about it? He said, it's just this.

The Jews have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge because they're ignorant of the righteousness that God has provided. And being ignorant of that righteousness, they're going about trying to establish their own righteousness by the law. But the truth is, they've never come to it.

They've never found it. Whereas the Gentiles, dumb as far as the law is concerned, have stumbled into the glorious righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ. And the Gentiles have attained it because they've attained it through the faith of Jesus Christ.

And thus they've experienced and entered in to the blessings of the grace of God. So, they're asking Paul to compromise his convictions. Paul said, I'm all things to all men that I might gain the more to the Jews.

I became a Jew. This is when he did. Alright, sure.

So, when the brothers come in and they say, what about this Paul? What's he saying? Look, he's, you know, he's paying the tab on these four guys and look, he's got a shaved head, you know, he's a good Jewish boy, don't worry about him. And as touching the Gentiles, they were worried that Paul was making Jews non-Jews. As far as the Gentiles are concerned, you don't do anything with them, you know, we've written to them and we've concluded that they don't have to observe these things, except they ought to just keep things, keep themselves from things offered to idols and from blood and things that are strangled for an occasion.

So, Paul took them in the next day and he purified himself and with them he entered into the temple to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification until that an offering should be offered for every one of them. Now, surely Paul would not have offered a sin offering because he knew that that was already accomplished once for all. But there were other offerings that would have been legitimate for a Christian to offer.

There were offerings, the burnt offerings, which were the offerings of consecration. There were the peace offerings, the meal offerings, the offerings of communion with God. And in the Kingdom Age, it speaks of offering sacrifices unto God.

They no doubt will be the peace offerings and the commitment offerings, the burnt offerings, the offerings of consecration. But the sin offering has been offered once and for all. Never again is it necessary to make a sin offering unto God.

That has been taken care of once and for all by Jesus Christ. But people read of the offerings in the Kingdom Age, wait a minute, how come they're offering offerings? Well, there are different offerings, not just sin offerings. There is the consecration, there is that communion, the peace offering.

And so when the seven days were almost over, the Jews, which were from Asia, when they saw Paul in the temple, they stirred up the people and they grabbed hold of him and they cried out, Men of Israel, help us! This is the man that is teaching everyone everywhere against the people and the law and this place. And he brought Greeks into the temple and has polluted the holy place. For earlier in the week, they had seen him in the city of Jerusalem with Trophimus, who was from Ephesus, and they supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple.

Now, there was the court of the Gentiles, but then there was the sign on the wall and it says any Gentile that goes beyond this sign is responsible for his own death. And the Romans respected the right of them to stone anybody who would go on in to the Jewish court. They would allow them to go ahead and stone them.

So, they were accusing Paul of profaning the temple by bringing Greeks into the temple, which Paul did not do. But they supposed that he did it because they had seen these Greeks with him in the city of Jerusalem. And so, all of the city was moved and the people ran together and they took Paul and drew him out of the temple and they shut the doors and as they went about to kill him, tidings came to the chief captain of the band that all Jerusalem was in an uproar and immediately he took soldiers and centurions and he ran down on to them and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, that is the guys that were beating him, they quit beating Paul.

Now, if there were thousands of Christians, where were they when Paul was being beat to death? You know, why didn't they come and help him? You know, there are thousands of Christians here, you know. There are thousands of believers now who keep the law. Well, they sure weren't around when Paul needed them.

And so, then the chief captain came near and he took him and he commanded Paul to be bound with two chains and demanded, who are you? What have you done? And some cried out one thing and others cried out another thing and among the multitude and he couldn't know of certainty because of the tumult. And so, he commanded Paul to be carried to the Antonio Fortress, which was on the edge of the Temple Mount. It is on the, it would be the northwest corner of the Temple Mount.

And so, when he came upon the stairs, there were two flights of stairs leading up into the Antonio Fortress. So, it was that he was carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the people. For the multitude of the people who were following after him were crying, away with him, the same cry that they were making against Jesus, away with him, away with him, crucify him, crucify him.

And so, when he came upon the stairs, so it was that he was carried by the soldiers and the multitude were crying away with him. And as Paul was to be led into the castle, the Antonio Fortress, he said to the chief captain, may I speak to you? And he said, can you speak Greek? Aren't you that Egyptian, which before these days made an uproar and led out into the wilderness 4,000 men who were murderers? Now, there was a fellow who came up from Egypt, a renegade who had gathered a group of people together and led them out to the Mount of Olives. And he said that he was going to cause the walls of Jerusalem to crumble.

And he went through his whole little deal and the walls didn't crumble. But he had a, he had a renegade band that he led out and they were then attacked by the Romans. And most of them were killed, but the guy escaped, the leader escaped.

And so the captain thought that this was the leaders of this Egypt, this Egyptian who had led this multitude a few years back. And so he said, aren't you that Egyptian? And Paul said, I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city. Hey, man, I'm a Roman citizen.

I'm a citizen from Tarsus. And I beseech thee, would you allow me to speak to the people? That Paul, gutsy guy. You know, here they're crying away with him, kill him, you know, and they're trying to kill him.

And now he's asking for permission to speak to the people. And when he had given him the license to do it, Paul stood on the stairs and he beckoned with a hand unto the people. And when there was made a great silence, he spake unto them in their Hebrew language saying.

And isn't that a crazy place to break a chapter? Now you're going to have to wait till next time to find out what he said. Created another riot, but interesting. So next week we continue.

You know, when we were kids in Sunday school, we used to sing Dare to be a Daniel. Too bad someone didn't write a song for the Sunday school children Dare to be a Paul. A man of total consecration and commitment of himself to God.

A man who had as his chief desire to do the will of God to finish and accomplish the purposes that God had in mind for him. Oh, would to God that we would dedicate ourselves totally, completely to that course that God has set for us. That we as Paul would seek primarily just to finish the course with joy as we fulfill the ministry that Christ has called us to.

May the Lord be with you and bless you this week in a very special way. May the Spirit draw you into a closer, more intimate fellowship with Jesus Christ. May you be strengthened by that work of the Spirit within your life.

May you be blessed in Jesus name.

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