

Bible Stories for Adults

Paul's Third Missionary Journey - Part 2

Acts 20

Opening

Gathering: Why is it difficult to say goodbye to someone when you expect you will never see them again?

Today's Focus: Paul completed his Third Journey understanding that God had other plans for him in other places.

Key Verses: *I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me – the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace. Acts 20:24*

In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus Himself said: "It is more blessed to give than to receive. Acts 20:35

Opening Prayer

Lesson

Apollos (Acts 18:23-28)

How did Paul begin his third journey? = Luke focused on gospel spreading, not just biography

Acts 18:23 = Revisited Galatian churches, probably 1 year in Antioch

What new missionary started working during this time that Paul was in Antioch and Galatia?

Acts 18:24-25 = Apollos, a Jew from Alexandria taught John's baptism in Ephesus

Ephesus - Capital of Asia, Large and wealthy - Called the *Treasure House of Asia*

Seat of Pan-Ionian Games, Asylum for criminals, Center of magic and superstition

How did Apollos learn the message of salvation to complete the stories he knew about Jesus?

Acts 18:26 = Aquila and Priscilla took him aside and explained it, didn't confront in public

With Aquila and Priscilla in Ephesus, where could Apollos be more effective?

Acts 18:27-28 (1 Corinthians 1:11-15; 3:3-9) = He was sent to Corinth - Very effective there

Incomplete Christians (Acts 19:1-7)

Where did Paul go on his third journey after Galatia and who did he meet as he arrived?

Acts 19:1-3 = Ephesus, Disciples of John's baptism, possibly early converts of Apollos

Why was John's baptism incomplete? = John taught first stage of recognizing sin and repenting

Acts 19:4 = Jesus brought critical second stage of forgiveness for sins and salvation

What did these incomplete Christians do after hearing Paul's message of Jesus' gospel?

Acts 19:5-7 = They were baptized into Jesus' name and received the Spirit

Luke records the Spirit to 4 groups: Jews-2, Samaritans-8, Gentiles-10, incomplete Christians-19

Paul in Ephesus (Acts 19:8-12)

With a church developed by Aquila and Priscilla, did Paul spend his time teaching that church?

Acts 19:8 = No, he went first to the Jews in the synagogue as usual

How was he received by the Jews? = Tyrannus likely lectured till 11am, Paul during 11-4 siesta

Acts 19:9-10 = Rejected after 3 months, held *discussions* in a lecture hall for 2 years

How effective was Paul during this time? = handkerchiefs - really sweatbands; work aprons

Acts 19:11-12 = Became very popular and *God did extraordinary miracles through Paul*

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Ephesian Magic (Acts 19:13-20)

How were Paul's extraordinary powers received in this center of magic?

Acts 19:13 = People tried to use his powers by referring to him

How did God make it clear that the name of Jesus wasn't just a new magic spell?

Acts 19:14-16 = He let an evil spirit acknowledge Jesus and Paul, but refuse exorcists

How did people respond when they heard that Jesus' name was too powerful for casual use?

Acts 19:17-20 = Realized Jesus is God, confessed, burned scrolls - drachma was day's wages

Ephesian Letters - Tiny scrolls with magical spells worn on necklace to bring success in life

Time to Leave (Acts 19:21-22)

After 3 months in the Ephesus synagogue and 2 years in the lecture hall, what did Paul decide?

Acts 19:21-22 = Time to move on, sights on Jerusalem, but visit Greece first

Besides checking up on things, what did Paul intend to do by passing through Greece?

1 Corinthians 16:1-4 (also Romans 15:25-27) = Take a collection for the poor in Jerusalem

Why did Paul send Timothy and Erastus ahead? = More to do in Ephesus

1 Corinthians 4:17; 7:1; 16:5-9 = Sent with a letter answering questions in letter from Corinth

Note: Paul wrote 1 Corinthians before leaving Ephesus after sending Timothy & Erastus to Macedonia

After staying in the Ephesus area *a little longer*, how long did Paul spend in Ephesus total?

Acts 20:31 = 3 years, the longest of any stay anywhere

Artists of Artemis (Acts 19:23-41)

What incident led to Paul leaving Ephesus? = Paul said *that man-made gods are no gods at all*

Acts 19:23-27 = Craftsmen who made souvenirs for visitors to temple of Diana upset

Artemis (*Diana* in Latin) - Multibreasted fertility goddess, statue fell from sky (likely a meteorite)

Temple of Artemis - One of the *Seven Wonders of the World*, 425' L x 220' W x 60' T

127 marble pillars, each given by a king; Altar by greatest Greek sculptor, Praxiteles

What did the rest of the crafts union think about this threat? = Took G&A into 25K seat theater

Acts 19:28-29 = They were furious, focused on threat to Diana to get others upset

Did Paul find a place to hide so he wouldn't be lynched by this wild mob?

Acts 19:30-31 = No, he wanted to speak to the crowd, but was stopped

How organized was the crowd? = Jews tried to make sure they weren't blamed, didn't work

Acts 19:32-34 = Most didn't even know what was going on

The Courts Are Open (Acts 19:35-20:1)

Who finally stood up and stopped the mayhem? = Christians have not threatened Diana

Acts 19:35-37 = The city clerk, official representative of the city to Rome

What did the city clerk think should be done about the threat to the souvenir business?

Acts 19:38-39 = Let the union bring a case before the courts, handle it properly

Did the city clerk's efforts have any effect on the mob?

Acts 19:40-41 = Yes, it broke up so Rome wouldn't punish them for rioting

Did Paul immediately leave town because of the opposition?

Acts 20:1 = No, he waited for things to settle down - didn't leave the church in a mess

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Corinthian Concerns (*2 Corinthians*)

- Where did Paul go after leaving Ephesus on his way to Macedonia?
2 Corinthians 2:12-13 = Troas, effective with the Gospel, upset he couldn't find Titus
- Did Paul find open doors and/or Titus in Macedonia?
2 Corinthians 7:5-7 = Found opposition, but also found Titus
- Why had Paul sent Titus to Corinth? = It hurt them, but led to repentance
2 Corinthians 7:8-10 = To see how his harsh letter had been received
- If Paul was on his way to Corinth, why did he send this second letter at this time?
2 Corinthians 8:16-17; 9:2-5 = Sent Titus ahead so they'd be ready with gift to Jerusalem

Grecian Travels (*Acts 20:2-6*)

- What does Luke tell us about Paul's time in Macedonia and Achaia (Corinth)? = Probably 1 year
Acts 20:2-3a = Not much - Traveled through Macedonia, stayed in Corinth 3 months
- What were Paul's plans after taking offerings to Jerusalem church?
Romans 15:23-28 = Visit Rome and Spain - Wrote book of Romans in Corinth
- How were Paul's plans to go to Jerusalem in time for the Passover changed?
Acts 20:3b = Jews planned to throw him overboard or the like, walked back through Macedonia
- Did the churches send anyone with Paul to deliver their offerings?
Acts 20:4 = Yes - 3 Macedonians, 2 Galatians, 2 Asians (Ephesus)
- Who joined Paul to represent the church in Philippi? = Luke in Philippi from 2nd Journey (Acts 16:12,40)
Acts 20:5-6 = Luke (us, we); Paul celebrated Passover in Philippi, met others in Troas
- If God had not led Paul back through Macedonia, we might not have books of Luke and Acts

Troas - The City of Open Doors and Windows (*Acts 20:7-12*)

- Did early Christians meet on the Sabbath (Saturday) like the Jews? = evening since a work day
Acts 20:7 = No, met on the Lord's Day (Revelation 1:10), Sunday; Shared Love Feast (potluck)
- What happened when Paul's long sermon hit the midnight mark?
Acts 20:8-9 = Young man put to sleep by vapors from lamps, fell from window and died
- What did Paul do after Dr. Luke had pronounced Eutychus dead?
Acts 20:10 = Like Elijah and Elisha, threw himself on body and resurrected him
- Did Paul take the hint that his sermon was too long?
Acts 20:11-12 = No, they went back, had Communion, Paul spoke until daylight

On the Road Again (*Acts 20:13-17*)

- After preaching all night, did Paul spend the next day sleeping on the ship to Jerusalem?
Acts 20:13 = The others did, Paul walked to Assos - let others verify safety of ship(?)
- Now that Luke was with Paul, do we get more details about his travels?
Acts 20:14-15 = Yes - Assos to Mitylene to Kios to Samos to Miletus (day-by-day)
- After 3 years in Ephesus, how could Paul just pass by without visiting his friends and coworkers?
Acts 20:16 = Had entourage and gifts and wanted to get to Jerusalem by Pentecost
- Did Paul even think about his friends and coworkers in Ephesus as he sailed by?
Acts 20:17 = Yes, and sent for elders to meet him in Miletus

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Past, Present and Future (Acts 20:18-35)

- What motive did Paul claim for his earlier work in Ephesus and what manner proved it?
Acts 20:18-19 = Motive - Serving the Lord; Manner - humility and courage
- What message had Paul taught as he served the Lord in Ephesus? = All to repent and have faith
Acts 20:20-21 = The truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth - publicly
- What plans did Paul tell the Ephesians he presently had?
Acts 20:22-23 = To go to Jerusalem, uncertain for what but compelled by the Spirit
- Why would Paul go to Jerusalem if prison and hardship was facing him?
Acts 20:24 = He must *finish the race and complete the task* given to him
- Why was Paul telling the Ephesians all of this?
Acts 20:25-27 = He knew he'd never see them again, he had completed his task in Asia
- What guidance did Paul want to leave with them?
Acts 20:28-31 = Be alert and careful shepherds of the flock, protect from false teachings
- How would they be able to protect the flock from savage wolves?
Acts 20:32 = By the help of God - Paul committed them to God's care
- How would they know how to lead the flock at Ephesus?
Acts 20:33-35 = Follow Paul's example while he was with them - give of yourself

Sad Farewells (Acts 20:36-21:16)

- How did the Ephesians respond to what Paul had said?
Acts 20:36-38 = They prayed and were very sad that they wouldn't see him again
- Where did Paul and his companions go then? = *After we had orn ourselves away from them*
Acts 21:1-3 = Miletus to Cos to Rhodes to Patara to Cyprus to Tyre - More Luke detail
- What did Paul and his group do during the week that the ship was unloading cargo in Tyre?
Acts 21:4 = Found and stayed with Christians, they tried to keep Paul from Jerusalem
- Since they had only known these Christians one week, was the good-bye any easier?
Acts 21:5-6 = A little, but still difficult
- Where did they go next? = Philip settled in Caesarea after his travels 20 years earlier (Acts 8:40)
Acts 21:7-9 = Tyre to Ptolemais to Caesarea - Stayed at Philip's house
- Did the Christians in Caesarea try to stop Paul from going on to Jerusalem?
Acts 21:10-12 = Yes they pleaded with him after Agabus prophesied Paul's doom
- Did this change Paul's mind?
Acts 21:13-16 = No, needed to follow the Spirit's lead and do the Lord's will, went to Jerusalem

Closing Prayer

Response - Consider and meditate on one each day this week

1. Who has been an encouragement to me during difficult times?
(2 Corinthians 7:5-7; Judges 20:22; 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17; 1 Tim 4:12-16; Hebrews 12:1-13)
2. How have I encouraged others when they needed it?
(Acts 20:17-38; 2 Chronicles 32:1-8; Isaiah 1:17; 1 Thess 5:11-14; Hebrews 3:12-13; 10:24-25)
3. When have I experienced godly sorrow? Did it lead me to repentance?
(2 Corinthians 7:8-12; 2 Samuel 11-12; Ezra 9:1-10:4; Luke 19:1-10; Acts 2:36-41)
4. How well have I given myself first to the Lord and then to others in rich generosity?
(2 Corinthians 8-9; Exodus 36:1-7; Deuteronomy 15:7-11; Acts 20:32-35; 1 Timothy 6:17-19)
5. How have I sacrificed my security and comfort in order to finish the race and complete the task?
(Acts 20:21-24; 21:4, 10-14; Matthew 6:25-34; 19:16-30; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; Galatians 5:7)