

Traveling with the Long-Winded Paul The First Pastor's Conference Round one Acts 20:1-24

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Paul had already been looking forward to moving on to Achaia and Macedonia prior to the Demetrius problem, with the near riot having concluded, now is most likely the right time to head out and it appears he did so.



Acts 20:1-2

"After the uproar had ceased, Paul sent for the disciples, and when he had encouraged them and taken his leave of them, he left to go to Macedonia. When he had gone through those regions and had given them much encouragement, he came to Greece." (NASB 2020)

The way you get there is by boat, via Troas at this time of year. Especially if your intent is to meet up with those you just sent ahead of you. How do we know that since Luke does not say much?

2 Corinthians 2:12-13

"Now when I arrived in Troas to proclaim the gospel of Christ, even though the Lord had opened a door of opportunity for me, I had no relief in my spirit, because I did not find my brother Titus there. So I said goodbye to them and set out for Macedonia." (NET 2nd ed.)

Titus is the most enigmatic figure in early Christian history...He enters on the stage of history for a short time in A.D. 45–6, and then we hear nothing of him, until we learn that Paul expected to find him in Troas in January or February 56. He was now on his way from Corinth to Macedonia; and he joined Paul after he had arrived at Philippi in February or March, bringing a detailed report of the state of the Corinthian Church. (Ramsay 1907, 284)

Paul was more than a little concerned about the church in Corinth based on what we see in his first letter, and he was hoping to hear from Titus who he sent there earlier, about the results of a letter alluded to but which we do not have a copy of. Titus did not make it to Troas as expected.

"Titus' purpose in visiting Corinth had been to deliver the critical "Severe Letter," now lost to us. From the earlier and parallel passage (2 Corinthians 2:1–11) it appears that Paul was not prepared to return to Corinth until the congregation had resolved their relationship with him. He would not make "another painful visit" to them (2:1).

During that visit the apostle had been "wronged" by an unnamed man (7:12; 2:5), who apparently had the ongoing support of a minority of the Corinthians (cf. 2:6). We conclude that the majority, while not disagreeing with Paul, had not actively supported him by taking disciplinary action against the offender, which the "Severe Letter" called upon them to do (2:9; 7:12)." (Barnett 1997, 365)

Paul wants to hear back from Titus about the results of the letter. So after doing ministry for some time in Troas, when the weather was closing off the sailing option, he headed over land towards Phillipi.

That is where Paul finally did meet up with Titus and received the good report of reassuring news from the church there. Paul was still intending to go to the churches in Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea.

He also wanted to go to Corinth, and now he can with a totally different attitude than he would have if there was still an issue.

2 Corinthians 7:5–13

"For even when we came into Macedonia, our body had no rest at all, but we were troubled in every way—struggles from the outside, fears from within. But God, who encourages the downhearted, encouraged us by the arrival of Titus. We were encouraged not only by his arrival, but also by the encouragement you gave him, as he reported to us your longing, your mourning, your deep concern for me, so that I rejoiced more than ever. For even if I made you sad by my letter, I do not regret having written it (even though I did regret it, for I see that my letter made you sad, though only for a short time). Now I rejoice, not because you were made sad, but because you were made sad to the point of repentance. For you were made sad as God intended, so that you were not harmed in any way by us. For sadness as intended by God produces a repentance that leads to salvation, leaving



no regret, but worldly sadness brings about death. For see what this very thing, this sadness as God intended, has produced in you: what eagerness, what defense of yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what deep concern, what punishment! In everything you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter. So then, even though I wrote to you, it was not on account of the one who did wrong, or on account of the one who was wronged, but to reveal to you your eagerness on our behalf before God. Therefore we have been encouraged. And in addition to our own encouragement, we rejoiced even more at the joy of Titus because all of you have refreshed his spirit." (NET 2nd ed.)

Titus, bringing good news from Corinth, encourages Paul and he was able to see in Titus, how encouraged Titus was from the time he had spent in Corinth with the church there.

With that done, he continues on with ministry in Macedonia.

Acts 20:2-3

"When he had gone through those regions and had given them much encouragement, he came to Greece. And there he spent three months, and when a plot was formed against him by the Jews as he was about to set sail for Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia." (NASB 2020)

After getting the good news from Titus, Paul writes another letter, 2 Corinthians, and gives it to Titus to take to them. Meanwhile, Paul continues to go through the locations he had been at before, going to Philippi and reconnecting with Dr. Luke there. He also went to Thessalonica and Berea before continuing into Greece, meaning Athens and of course, Corinth.

Paul was there in Corinth for three months. While there, he writes and sends a letter off to the church in Rome. He was really expecting to be there soon, right after completing the trip to Jerusalem to drop off the gift for the church there. But Paul caught wind of a plot to most likely kill him while at sea. So, plans were changed. More changes were coming.

Instead of sailing for Jerusalem direct, since there were those who were to sail with him who wanted him dead, he would go by land to Troas instead and he sent a group there ahead of him. And notice, Luke is traveling with him again.

Acts 20:4-5

"And he was accompanied by Sopater of Berea, the son of Pyrrhus, and by Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia. Now these had gone on ahead and were waiting for us at Troas." (NASB 2020)

Paul and the rest of the team were traveling on foot with the intent to get to Troas, meet with those who went ahead, and then sail from there.

Now that Luke is with Paul again, we begin to pick up up on more details, like how long they were in Philippi before heading to Troas.

Acts 20:6

"We sailed from Philippi after the days of Unleavened Bread, and reached them at Troas within five days; and we stayed there for seven days." (NASB 2020)

Recall, the first time they came from Troas, they did it in three days, now it takes five since they are returning against the wind.

Paul meets with the church on Sunday to share with them and have a meal with the church in Troas. "The early church met on the first day of the week. That was the important day because it was the day when



Jesus came back from the dead. Under the old creation the seventh day was the important day, the Sabbath day. That belongs to the old creation. On the Sabbath day Jesus was dead, inside the tomb. On the first day of the week He came forth. We meet on that day because we are now joined to a living Christ. That is the testimony of the first day of the week." (McGee 1997, 602) That is why we gather together on Sunday, we are following the example we see from the early church.

Acts 20:7-8

"On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul began talking to them, intending to leave the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight. There were many lamps in the upstairs room where we were gathered together." (NASB 2020)

Welcome to Troas, Sunday service begins at 9am with breakfast and ends, probably just in time for work tomorrow. Don't sit near the windows okay.

It appears this is not an unusual thing, to go on teaching until the wee hours of the morning. The upstairs rooms are fully equipped for this.

In the 21st century, where we hear Laodicean churches saying that no one can concentrate on a message for more than 15 minutes, Paul goes for hours and hours. And everyone stays to hear him. I have indeed been in those services where the speaker is so boring that I couldn't wait until he stopped. And then there are those times where the word is being taught, and I lose track of time and just do not understand why we had to stop after only 1 ½ hours. God's word, not Ted talks, does that.

No, I do not intend to go with the Paul and Troas model of teaching and preaching once we have a building, but I do like how Dr. McGee puts it.

I tell congregations very frankly that I'm a long-winded preacher. I'm known as that. I love to teach the Word of God. I have a system of homiletics that I never learned in the seminary. I picked it up myself—in fact, I got it from a cigarette commercial. This is it: It's not how long you make it but how you make it long. I believe in making it long; my scriptural authority for it is that Paul did it. He spoke until midnight. You can't help but smile at that. (McGee 1997, 602)

The key, as we will discover, is to not teach from the third floor with an open window and allowing some of those listening to sit in the window.

We will discover that even death, is not an excuse to miss church for Paul.

Acts 20:9-12

"And there was a young man named Eutychus sitting on the window sill, sinking into a deep sleep; and as Paul kept on talking, Eutychus was overcome by sleep and fell down from the third floor, and was picked up dead. But Paul went down and fell upon him, and after embracing him, he said, "Do not be troubled, for he is still alive." When Paul had gone back up and had broken the bread and eaten, he talked with them a long while until daybreak, and then left. They took away the boy alive, and were greatly comforted." (NASB 2020)

Paul teaches and teaches and teaches. He is not the most dynamic speaker around and yes, he can put listeners to sleep.

Somewhere along the line, Eutychus, whose name really does mean fortunate, falls asleep. The text tells us he falls into a deep sleep, think snoring. Suddenly, he falls out of the third-floor window onto the ground outside and dies. Now what? End of the service? Not hardly.



Paul goes downstairs to check on Eutychus, raises him from the dead, then everyone goes back upstairs for an early breakfast, oh, and more teaching until sunrise.

If Paul can put people to sleep, so can I. However, we will make certain there are no open windows, stairs, or anything else.

Gift of teaching, I do believe I have that gifting. Gift of miracles and raising people from the dead, that I am not so sure of.

As Paul prepares to leave, Dr. Luke wants us to know that Eutychus is just fine. But the much larger team, with all who are now traveling along with Paul, does indeed go to the harbor and sets sail for Miletus and the first pastor's conference we read of in the Bible. Paul though, decides to walk and meet everyone at Assos.

Acts 20:13-17

"But we went ahead to the ship and set sail for Assos, intending from there to take Paul on board; for that was what he had arranged, intending himself to go by land. And when he met us at Assos, we took him on board and came to Mitylene. Sailing from there, we arrived the following day opposite Chios; and the next day we crossed over to Samos, and on the following day we came to Miletus. For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus so that he would not have to lose time in Asia; for he was hurrying, if it might be possible for him to be in Jerusalem the day of Pentecost. From Miletus he sent word to Ephesus and called to himself the elders of the church." (NASB 2020)

Paul is in a hurry to reach Jerusalem and decides not to go to Ephesus but then calls for the elders of Asia to come and meet him in Miletus "to join in a "Spiritual Leadership Conference." He is the speaker, and his message long but shorter than his preaching at Pisidian Antioch (13:16–41) or his sharing at Troas (20:6–12)." (Rosscup 2008, 1952)

Yes, it was important then for those who are in ministry to come together for encouragement and it is still important to do so today.

Why didn't he go to Ephesus? Conjectures range from his being banished to pending court action. Needless to say, he felt it was safer for the entire team to remain on the coast 20 miles away and allow the elders in Asia to come to them for the conference.

His message to them will indeed be shorter, but the content will hit and hit hard. Paul knows that he will not be returning and he wants to have a final time with all of those who he has spent time with. The temptation to make ministry all about yourself rather than the Lord is not new. Paul had already seen it take place and he will use his own ministry as an example for those coming to warn them.

Acts 20:18-24

"And when they came to him, he said to them, "You yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, how I was with you the whole time, serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and trials which came upon me through the plots of the Jews; how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was beneficial, and teaching you publicly and from house to house, solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. And now, behold, bound by the Spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in every city, saying that chains and afflictions await me. But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of God's grace." (NASB 2020)



Point one, Paul was serving the Lord in humility. He is not thinking of himself as being better than anyone else at all. He does not hide out in the green room before and after a service to avoid the flock.

He does not have others surround him to keep the flock away, he is a true shepherd and wants to spend time with the flock more than anything else even to the rejection of his own personal time and space. Those so-called teachers we see all around today who have moved to being "superstar pastors" with armies of staff to protect them from the flock and prevent anyone from talking to or even seeing them except when on stage did not exist then and Paul would be the first today to condemn them. He would not be the only one.

Harry Ironside, the pastor of the Moody Church in Chicago from 1928 to 1948 said the following in 1943.

"If there is any position, any calling where pride should have no place, it is in connection with the ministry of the Word of God, for, to begin with, the minister of Christ is one who was just a poor, lost, needy sinner, but who has been saved by grace and entrusted with a message to the world and to the people of God. He does not receive this because of any merit of his own. It is all because of the goodness of the Lord. Certainly therefore he has nothing to be proud of.

When people used to crowd around George Whitefield and praise him because of his marvelous preaching, he would stop them like this: "The devil told me that just before I came down from the pulpit." Then he would add, "There are many who can preach the gospel better than I can, but none can preach a better gospel." It is the message that counts. The servant is really nothing, and the more we realize this and are willing to take the place of nothingness, the more God delights to come in and work through His servants." (Ironside 1943, 470-471)

In 2 Corinthians, Paul gives us a strong hint of his fear and what he was already seeing take place in the church.

2 Corinthians 11:4-6

"You happily put up with whatever anyone tells you, even if they preach a different Jesus than the one we preach, or a different kind of Spirit than the one you received, or a different kind of gospel than the one you believed. But I don't consider myself inferior in any way to these "super apostles" who teach such things. I may be unskilled as a speaker, but I'm not lacking in knowledge. We have made this clear to you in every possible way." (NLT)

The Jesus of the Laodicean church does not exist, never has. We know that since Jesus is standing outside that church knocking on the door to get in.

Revelation 3:20

"Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends." (NLT)

Today, the Jesus of the Bible, stands outside many so-called churches knocking on the door to get in since He has been replaced by a domesticated Jesus that can be better controlled by those who want to be affirmed in their sinful lifestyles. They love the Jesus of the manger, but not the Jesus who cleared out the Temple. They love the Jesus who says to love your neighbor as yourself. A true statement indeed but they rebel at the following Jesus said.

Matthew 16:24-27

"Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or



what shall a man give in return for his soul? For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done." (ESV)

The Jesus of the prosperity gospel, the spirit of the prosperity gospel, the Jesus of the "super apostles" and prophets" of the New Apostolic Reformation, none of them are the Jesus of the Bible. The Jesus that Paul preached and the Jesus that we preach here at Calvary Chapel.

But Ken, look at the ministry they have and the followers they have online and the great works they do. Paul was genuine in his warning and in his drawing comparisons to himself and his own ministry.

2 Corinthians 11:12–15

"But I will continue doing what I have always done. This will undercut those who are looking for an opportunity to boast that their work is just like ours. These people are false apostles. They are deceitful workers who disguise themselves as apostles of Christ. But I am not surprised! Even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is no wonder that his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. In the end they will get the punishment their wicked deeds deserve." (NLT)

If they believe Jesus is someone they can bargain with and control with made up rules, formulas and "laws" of the universe, that is not the Jesus of the Bible.

If they do not believe that He performed miracles, they have a different Jesus in mind, because the Jesus in the Gospels is the One who performed miracles. He is the One who died for the sins of the world, which they deny. They deny that He was raised from the dead bodily. They deny that He is the God-Man. Yet one of the oldest creeds declares that He is very God of very God and very man of very man. If that is denied, then a different Jesus is being presented. (McGee, Thru the Bible Commentary 1997, 137)

The first thing that Paul announces here to this group of pastors, right up front at the very beginning, is he approached all he did with humility, so should they. Stop reading your own press clippings and thinking you are something when the reality is simple, we are all sinners saved by grace.

His faithfulness stood even in the face of organized religious opposition. Today he would also add that he remained faithful even in the face of certain influencers on the internet who love to belittle everyone for the sake of their own brand. You see, Paul's brand is Jesus, our brand is the same.

Paul was no phony. He was transparent to those he ministered to and remained so while serving the Lord in ministry. The emotions were real, the heart for the people was real. And the key, his second point, he held nothing back but was engaged in teaching all the word. Not just selected bits and pieces to engender a following on You Tube and grow a large church of happy spiritually dead people. He taught the scriptures.

Acts 20:20-21

"how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was beneficial, and teaching you publicly and from house to house, solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ." (NASB 2020)

How do we do this today? By teaching the whole council of God, the Bible contains that and so we commit to teach His word chapter by chapter and verse by verse. That means even things that are agreeable to us, things that challenge us, and then things that convict and change us. As Paul went about teaching, he also realized that his life and the manner in which he lived it was part of that lesson plan.



The message that Paul gave was consistent to all that he presented it to. The entire council of God, and the need to repent and have faith, to believe in the work that Jesus Christ achieved for us on the cross when He died for our sins and then rose from the dead three days later.

Paul is using his ministry, and the changed lives of those who are listening to him, as the backdrop. He practices what he preaches. He is not that well-rehearsed super star preacher since Paul tells us that he is consistent in what he says and does.

Paul's ministry has three characteristics: faithfulness, direct preaching of all that is necessary, and testimony about Jesus to all people without distinction, including a call to have faith in God's work through Jesus. (Bock 2007, 627-628)

1 Corinthians 9:16-17

"Yet preaching the Good News is not something I can boast about. I am compelled by God to do it. How terrible for me if I didn't preach the Good News! If I were doing this on my own initiative, I would deserve payment. But I have no choice, for God has given me this sacred trust," (NLT)

He is not the guy who stands up front and tells you do what I say and not what I do. He says and does the same. Note that there are those who travel with him, he is indeed being held accountable by them as he is completely transparent.

That is a tough commodity to find these days as we want to put our best face forward all the time. I fail at that way more than I should. We all do. Transparency in ministry and with each other means we, again, are all nothing more than sinners saved by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Once more, back to the humility that Paul began with. And with that, Paul makes an announcement.

Acts 20:22-24

"And now, behold, bound by the Spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in every city, saying that chains and afflictions await me. But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of God's grace." (NASB 2020)

Paul is so in love with Jesus that he has reached the point in his life where the Holy Spirit can hold him captive. He uses the word δεδεμένος (dedemenos).

This word comes from the root, deo and means "to confine a person or thing by various kinds of restraints, bind, tie... of binding and imprisoning persons...to tie something to something...to constrain by law and duty, bind. (Arndt, et al. 2000, 221-222)

And here when Paul uses this verb, it is in the perfect passive. This is a tense used to describe a completed verbal action in the past that produces a result in the present. When Paul followed Jesus, he became bound to Him through the Spirit.

And yes, for all of us who are followers of Jesus, we too have been bound to Jesus by the Holy Spirit. The emphasis is not so much on the "past action so much as it is as such but the present "state of affairs" resulting from the past action." (Heiser and Setterholm 2013)

And with this in the passive, it tells us that this binding, which took place in the past, that we are the receivers of this action done by God on our behalf.

Paul is bound, following Jesus wherever Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, leads.



Paul is obedient to the point of being bound, he must follow the Lord no matter what. This is an example for us as well. Are we so following Jesus that as He leads, we go because we are bound to follow Him no matter what. Paul was.

He is on his way to Jerusalem because the Lord has made it clear to him through the Holy Spirit, that is where he is to go. And one more thing, every place he goes, there are those with the gift of prophecy who are telling him what is going to take p[lace to him once he gets there.

Earlier, Paul had become aware of a plot to kill him on the voyage there.

The group that wants him dead is most likely already there. Knowing that Paul had planned to be there, they may be doing some planning on their own as well.

All that Paul knows is he is to remain faithful to what the Lord has called him to do. He knows this is not an event that will take place in Asia, he must get to Jerusalem for all the events and what the Lord has in store for him to take place.

When the Lord is leading you, all we can do is faithfully follow Him and leave the results up to Him.

Way too many today see ministry as a means to an end. It is just a "job." It is their career and for some denominations, you climb the small to large church ladder rather than allow the Lord to call you to a place and you minister there exclusively.

Jesus called those who acted in that manner towards the sheep "hirelings." Hired hands who did not care about the flock at all, it was all about the sheepherd and not the sheep. But it is all about the sheep that Jesus purchased on the cross with His own blood. The privilege to teach, minister to, fellowship with and be part of His flock is precious, and we should never take it for granted.

Paul's ministry was both comprehensive and consistent. He didn't view the ministry as a career. He didn't punch a clock. His ministry was an all-consuming task, and he fulfilled it in Ephesus daily. He fulfilled it with humility and passion, with faithfulness and courage. (Merida 2017, 315-316)

Whatever it is the Lord has called each of us to do, He asks us to be faithful in that calling. Paul is telling the group he has been that.

Faithfulness like this is only possible through the Holy Spirit. And that binding we have discussed is only possible with a decision.

That decision is one which all followers of Jesus Christ have made and none of us have ever regretted it. Why not join us?

Romans 3:21-24

"But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are. For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins." (NLT)

Romans 10:9-13

"If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. As the Scriptures tell us, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be



disgraced." Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him. For "Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved."" (NLT)

ABC's of Salvation

- A. Acknowledge that you are a sinner, tell Him that.
- B. Believe that Jesus died on the cross for our sin and that He rose from the dead.
- C. Confess that Jesus is Lord. Tell someone about what you have done.

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