Text: Acts 20:1-12
Title: Paul's Farewell Meeting at Troas
Truth: Paul had a wonderful farewell meeting with the Troas church.
Date/Location: Wednesday December 18, 2013 and 1/22/2025 at FBC

Introduction

Paul has been ministering away from his home church for some time. Luke has recorded for us a compendium of his travels: missionary journey #1 around central Asia Minor (Acts 13-14); return to Antioch (Acts 14-15); journey #2 in Asia Minor and into the European cities of Philippi, Thessalonica, Athens, and Corinth (Acts 16-18); another return to Antioch; missionary journey #3 in Asia Minor again, with a focus on Ephesus (Acts 18-19), over to Macedonia, back to Troas and Ephesus (Acts 20) and then on to Jerusalem (Acts 21) where he was arrested. The remainder of Luke's second book focuses on Paul's delayed progress to Rome and ministry there (Acts 21-28). We are studying in the middle of journey #3.

I. Travel to Jerusalem via a Circuitous Route

A. After the riot settled down, Paul invited the Christians there to visit so he could say goodbye because he was leaving, perhaps never to return. He embraced the disciples in an affectionate expression of Christian love. He truly loved them, and hopefully they loved him as well, for he brought them the gospel. He taught them for a long time and imparted to them everything he could to help them live a life of godliness and to stand before Jesus's throne of judgment as blameless as possible (Col. 1:28).

B. Paul left Ephesus and went to Macedonia. Note that he had not been to Macedonia yet for any length of time on this third missionary tour. He may have had a brief but painful visit to Corinth during that time as indicated in 2 Corinthians, but I am not certain on the timing of that.

C. Paul not only traveled to those places, but he *encouraged* the Christians in them *with many words*. That reminds me that yes, we can use words to encourage people. We can also use words sinfully to discourage people. And it reminds me that we can and must use words. We should use words, and we should encourage people wherever we go.

D. Then he went southward to Greece (the region of Achaia) and stayed there three months. Undoubtedly he continued to encourage the Christians to strengthen them to walk with the Lord.

Application: That's what we should be about doing too!

E. He had planned to sail straight from there to Syria. But a plot against his life altered his plans and he had to go back north through Macedonia to avoid the plot. This is terrible.

F. Luke mentions several traveling with him. These were representatives of churches who were participating in the Jerusalem offering:

- Sopater of Berea
- Aristarchus and Secundus of Thessalonica
- Gaius from Derbe
- Timothy from Lystra/Iconium
- Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia
- Luke. We get a clue from 20:5 which says, "These men…waited for **us** at Troas." We last left Luke in Acts 16:16, "as **we** went to prayer." It appears that Luke was not thrown into the Philippian jail, and perhaps stayed in Philippi until this point when Paul came back through Philippi (20:6).

G. All the men above except Luke sailed directly to Troas (west coast of Asia Minor) ahead of Paul and Luke. This journey was about 150 miles over sea. They awaited Paul to take a longer, perhaps more circuitious route, probably to avoid the expected location of some assassins.

H. Paul and Luke (and some interpreters add Titus) followed after stopping at Philippi. It took them 5 days to make the sea journey. The same trip in the reverse direction took about two days on Paul's second journey (Acts 16:11). Perhaps traveling weather was not as good, or the boat was not as capable, or longer stops were on the itinerary.

II. Arrival At Troas

A. Paul and company stayed 7 days, but 20:16 tells us that Paul was in a hurry to get to Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost. He was not early enough to make it for Passover. Note that the length of time between unleavened bread (20:6) and Pentecost (20:16) is 50 days. 12 of those were eaten up with travel to and staying at Troas.

B. Paul arrived about on a Monday and stayed through the next Sunday. He preached late into the evening, making the most use of his time there before he had to leave.

C. **Application**: Missionary work sometimes entails a lot of traveling—and travel difficulties and delays. If you are in the midst of travel woes, I advise you do not see it as a *delay* in the work; instead, see it as *part of* the work.

III. Preaching at Troas

A. Notice the first of the week: Sunday, when we hold our primary worship services. We do so for these reasons:

1. The Biblical example here as well as in 1 Cor. 16:2 and Revelation 1:10.

2. The resurrection occurred on the first day of the week (Matt 28:1).

3. The first day of the week is prime time to be given to the Lord as first-fruits, the best of our week.

4. We are not under a Sabbath command anymore (Col. 2:16-17, Rom. 14:5, Gal. 4:10-11). Even if we were under the law of the Sabbath, we would not spend the Sabbath at church (and for pastors, wearing ourselves out). We would instead be resting!

Application: I am convinced that we should meet on Sundays as well. We can meet any time too, but particularly in our cultural context with weekends off and Sundays available, there is no reason *not* to do so. We can be assured that Saturday is not the only day for worship.

B. The language of verse 7 indicates the disciples' tradition was to come together to break bread. They did this on a regular basis, likely every week. They wanted to spend time together after several days of working. They met over a meal, and then at least sometimes had a message afterward.

C. Notice the time of day: Paul spoke until midnight. This makes it clear to me that they met in the evening—for Sunday evening church. Why would they do this? In the ancient Roman empire, there was no "weekend." The people worked every day. They had holidays instead to give a rest from labor. It was not until 321 AD when Constantine made Sunday a day of rest across the Roman Empire. There was a tradition called the nundinum, which was on the 8th day people would stop their usual work and have a "farmer's market" to sell and purchase food, but this was not a day of rest for everyone.

Application: The early church example is a good one and well justifies why we meet on Sunday evenings. There is historical and *Biblical* precedent for it. Is it commanded? No, it is not. Is it beneficial? It can be and should be.

D. An accidental death happened in the meeting. Recently in our area there was a church funeral service where one of the attenders suffered one or more blood clots, collapsed in the service, and did not surive. Factors involved in the death of Eutychus included Paul's long preaching until

late into the night; the many lamps giving off fumes/smoke; and the playfulness of a boy who wanted to listen to the preaching while sitting in a third-story window. There may have been a fourth factor—heat. This was in the springtime and the weather may have been warm, with heat rising to the third floor.

It seemed like a good idea when he started sitting there, but after awhile the factors collided in a fatal accident that left the boy on the ground beneath the window, dead from the trauma of the fall—internal injuries or a head injury. He was a young man, maybe 10 or 15 although one source says the word refers to someone 24-40 years of age. Anyone can be overcome by sleep in a long meeting especially if they have been working at a hard job all day and just had a nice meal and it is late.

E. Paul came down from the upper room and raised the boy to life by God's power. His resurrection was not to a glorified body, but to his regular human body. This is only able to be described as a miracle. Luke was present, and maybe he was the doctor who pronounced the boy dead. He was really dead, and then really alive again. His restoration to life was a huge comfort to the people of the church. Of course, we do not want church attendance to be a fatal activity!

Some people think or act as though going to church is very risky. I speak lightheartedly to encourage you to become more faithful in attending the church. But you have heard of more extreme cases of people who say that the church walls will fall down on them if they come into the church because they have misbehaved so badly or so rarely go into God's house.

I do not know of a way to apply this teaching to you today since such miracles are not applicable.

F. Paul brought the boy upstairs, and they enjoyed Christian life together—eating, talking, and doing so throughout the night until daybreak. They had a very long gathering, perhaps 12 hours or so from the evening of preaching starting at maybe 6pm until midnight, and then saving the boy and fellowshipping until 6am. **Application**: there is no rule that church gatherings have to be done after only a couple of hours! Take all your TV time and add it up, and ask yourself if you would just as willingly be at church for that amount of time talking, studying, hearing preaching, prayer, singing, etc.

G. Paul had no worries about being too tired the next day, for he was traveling and I suppose that he could sleep on the boat. More important was the fellowship with people he may never see again in this life.

H. Paul sailed on to some other cities and eventually to Miletus where a meeting was hastily arranged with the Ephesian church leaders. He was still on his way to Jerusalem, trying to arrive before Pentecost.

Conclusion

Why is the Eutychus narrative in the text? Because it is a miracle? It does verify again Paul's apostolic authenticity. He was a messenger sent by God.

This narrative also exemplifies God's grace, because it was not at all necessary for God to raise the young man from the dead. He could have left him dead as he has let so many other believers die through the ages.

1. If he were a Christian fellow, it would be worse for him to come back into this life than to be in heaven in the next. It would be sort of a blessing to die while listening to an apostle and go straight to heaven than to have to endure some of the suffering that people do endure in this life with persecution, illness, betrayal, and the like.

2. It may also be that the young man was not yet a Christian. It was much better for him to be brought back to life and have further opportunity to receive Christ.

Paul's ministry wherever he went was to evangelize and then to encourage. He did that in Troas, not leaving the group to take care of a funeral when dawn broke. These would be their final, fond memories of Paul, since he was not coming back to them. Those memories would serve to strengthen their faith for decades to come and even beyond as those people shared what they witnessed to the next generation.

Application: We too have experienced things that God has done for us. We can tell our next generation and be encouraged by them. We just need to remember (Psalm 145:4)!

MAP