

**The Tuesday Afternoon Bible Study - Acts 20**  
Plots, Farewells, and The Boy Who Fell Asleep in Church

Around the end of chapter 18, Paul concluded his 2<sup>nd</sup> Journey by returning from Corinth to visit Jerusalem and then headed home to Antioch. In 18:23 he again departs for Turkey. That is the quiet transition from his 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey into his 3<sup>rd</sup> Journey. Last week in Acts 19, he continued on this journey, culminating in the riot at Ephesus. Today in ch 20, this 3<sup>rd</sup> Journey continues as he makes his way back to Jerusalem.

But something is different now. Paul has a sense of what lies ahead in Jerusalem. Chapter 20 acts as a transitional part of the big story - convinced of suffering that lies ahead, nevertheless Paul encourages the churches he visits once last time as his destiny in Jerusalem looms closer and closer.

Read Acts 20: 1-6      Change of Plans

1. After the riot in Ephesus (Turkey) calms down, Paul will cross the Aegean Sea for Macedonia and Greece and ministers there. His plans to sail straight home to Antioch are thwarted by a plot against his life. He instead will begin his journey home by retracing his steps up through Macedonia and then across the Aegean Sea once again to Troas (Turkey), on the coast in Asia.

Here's the handy map:

<https://kimberlinglutheran.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Lesson-17-Pauls-second-missionary-journey1.jpg>

2. Luke lists by name 7 men who travel with him, and where they are from. By now, can you picture where they are from in your head? It is quite an international cast.

Read Acts 20: 7-12      An Exciting Farewell in Troas

1. On Paul's last night in town, they have a church service, "on the first day of the week." This is the first unambiguous reference to church being held on a Sunday. Think back to your normal Sunday routine, and how your schedule has changed since COVID. Sunday is still our Sabbath today. What are you doing these days to keep your Sabbath day special?
2. On his last night with them, Paul is still preaching at midnight. Upstairs, sitting in a window and listening to Paul, tired Eutychus can't hold out anymore and falls asleep sitting in the window - then falls 3 floors to his death. Paul picks him up, pronounces that he's still "alive," and heals him. (Make no mistake - he was dead.) He is brought back to life, and everyone is comforted. And then what does Paul do? After eating a midnight meal, he continues preaching until dawn. Have you ever stayed up all night for a church activity? (Note: Part of Orthodox Christianity's celebration of Easter involves all-night vigils. Part of Spain's celebration of Christmas Eve involves a late night meal, and all-night family celebration.)

Read Acts 20: 8-16      Heading home

1. As Paul leaves Troas, use this new map to see the cities mentioned in these verses. He heads right down the coast of Asia.

[http://www.bibletrack.org/notes/image/Paul\\_Third.jpg](http://www.bibletrack.org/notes/image/Paul_Third.jpg)

2. Paul wants to arrive in Jerusalem by Pentecost, so he takes the express route, which will bypass Ephesus. Still, he wants to bid the Ephesian elders farewell, so he arranges for them to come over to Miletus and meet his ship there instead.

Read Acts 20: 17-38      The Big Farewell for the Ephesian Elders

1. Carefully read these verses, imagining you are there listening to Paul sum up his ministry to your church. What things do you learn about Paul? What things does Paul consider important? If you would sum up the most important things about being a Christian leader, what would they be? If we were in class, we would spend a lot of time on this farewell, and try to come up with a long list.
2. Note that Paul realizes his return to Jerusalem is going to be dangerous, and that imprisonment and persecutions await him (v23).
3. Note their final farewell in vv.36-38, with prayers, weeping, embraces, and kisses goodbye. Have you ever said goodbye to someone, knowing you would never see them again?

Next week, in Acts 21, we travel with Paul back to Jerusalem. We are with him in his last days of freedom, as the tension mounts along the journey leading up to his arrest. Chapter 21 marks an entrance into imprisonment, with speeches, trials, appeals, more trials, and more speeches to come.