

Acts 20:13-38

Intro:

C.S. Lewis.....4 Loves “Lovers build their relationship face to face but friends build their relationship side by side. Lovers are driven by emotion, chemistry, and passion. But friends are motivated by choice and therefore friendship is more substantial than eros.”

Part of what Lewis postured is that contemporary culture has largely devalued friendship in favor of romantic love. Whereas, in ancient cultures, friendship was much more important.

Last Week We Noted That Next Few Passages and Chapters Deal w/ Paul's Directive to Go to Jerusalem

- **Acts 19:22** “Behold, I am on my way to Jerusalem, bound in spirit.”
- This did not happen immediately. Paul understood that he was to eventually return to Jerusalem not knowing what would be in store for him there.
- Last week we saw that he still traveled to Macedonia, Greece, and back to Troas. He was continuing to minister and take up and offering for the persecuted believers in Jerusalem.

Acts 20: 13-38

I. The Example for Believers 20:18-27

II. The Expectation of Believers 20:28-35

IV. The Exit of Believers 20:36-38

They Arrive in Miletus

Read 20:13-16

- Paul instructed the other missionaries to leave Troas by boat, but he would go by land.
- This may have been because he was often wearing a target on his back in these regions
- Paul had made led many to Christ, but also made enemies by those who reject the Gospel
- Many of the Jews in the towns Paul visited were hostile to him.
- So is entirely possible that avoiding the sea was better option than being exposed.

Vs. 16 Luke makes a special note about sailing past Ephesus

- He appears to give an explanation which is that of time. Paul was hoping to be in Jerusalem for Pentacost. It may have been so he could preach?
- Maybe it was because he saw this as an opportunity to reach many Jews who may have returned for Passover & Pentecost?
- Presumably, they knew that the ship would be pausing in Miletus long enough to see friends

Once Docked In Miletus Paul Called for the Elders of Ephesus To Come See Him

- Ephesus is about 30 miles to the North
- It kind of makes sense. More efficient for smaller group to come to him.
- If the Ephesian elders come to Paul and can maximize his time with them unit boarding the ship.
- Additionally, his time is quality time with those whom he had left in charge
- Those individuals who were commissioned to oversee the young church.
 - We can just imagine what the demand might be like to have an audience with Paul
 - We saw how Jesus often had to separate from the crowds maybe by boat or hillside
 - Peter & John were ambushed with the sick and needy.
 - We can assume that many believers likewise loved spending time with Paul.
- In this case, Paul can spend quality time with a more manageable ratio of himself to believers.

I. The Example to Believers 18-27

Vs. 18 *“you yourselves know, from the first day I set foot in Asia how I was with you the whole time”*

- NIV *“You know how I lived the whole time I was with you”*
- CEV *“You know everything I did during the time I was with you in Asia”*
- Paul isn’t saying “I lived in your house and spent all my time with you”
 - He’s saying when I was in Ephesus, you saw how I lived.
 - You saw what motivates me, what compels me, you saw my desire to serve God.

Paul Gives 4 General Examples of His Service to The Lord

1. Vs. 19- Paul served the Lord with humility tears, trials and the plotting by Jews.

- **Humility** - *“I am the chief of sinners” “I am an apostle untimely born,”*
“I consider my life not important” “I am poured out like a drink offering”
“We are dying daily so that you might have life.”
- **Tears** - Paul would have cried for many reasons:
 - **Romans 9** cried for Jews who rejected the Gospel, would prefer to trade places
 - **II Cor. 2:4** lamented over the immaturity of new believers
 - *“I should have been rejoicing over you but instead you make me cry.”*
 - **Acts 20:29-30** saddened by knowledge of false teachers who come into the flock.
- **Trials** -
 - **II Cor. 11:25** Beaten, robbed, whipped, stoned, shipwrecked, left for dead.

2. Vs. 20,26,27 Paul never withheld an opportunity to teach and grow disciples in the Lord

- As God gave Paul truths to share, he shared them no matter the venue
- Paul taught in the synagogue, in the school of Tyrannus, & many public forums
- We also know that he taught privately in homes when the public places became hostile

3. Vs. 21 Paul continually witnessed to both Jews & Gentiles of Repentance & Faith in Jesus

- He was passionate about his own people and embraced his call to the Gentiles
- He systematically went first to the Jews in each city & then to the Gentiles
- How often do we withhold message of repentance in Jesus to those we consider unworthy?

4. Vs 22-25 Paul did not prioritize the preservation of his own life

“And now, behold, bound in spirit I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city saying that bonds and afflictions await me.”

- Paul clearly understood that it was the Holy Spirit’s directive to go to Jerusalem
 - Paul understood that bonds and afflictions awaited him in Jerusalem
 - He expected this. He understood that his suffering would glorify God.
- **II Tim. 4:7-8** *“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith. In the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge will award to me on that day.....”*
 - **Jude** *“Now to Him who is able to protect you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory, blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority before all time and now and forever. Amen.”*

II. The Expectation of Believers 28-35

Paul Is Going to Charge or Instruct the Elders of What Is Expected of Them

"I have given you the example, Holy Spirit will empower you, now live like this....."

1. Believers Are To Be On Guard....To Care for the Flock:

Vs. 28-30 *"Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things to draw away the disciples after them."*

- Be on guard first for ourselves. We cannot effectively shepherd if we're not in the Word
- Paul told the Elders the Holy Spirit Made them overseers of God's people
- Every believer is a steward in some form of what God has entrusted to him/her
- Savage wolves will come in among you
- These people will come from the outside & the inside.
- Every believer is to test what is being taught and to evaluate it according to God's Word.

2. Be on Alert Because I Am Entrusting You to God's Care:

Vs. 31-32 *"Therefore, be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears. And now I entrust you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified."*

- 3 years Paul never stopped admonishing church with tears. He expects them to do the same
- I am now entrusting you to God's care
- God & the word of His grace will sustain you.
(This is much like Jesus' prayer in John 17 about the disciples....I have not lost one you have entrusted to me. I commend them to You Father)
- The grace of God is able to build you up, give you an inheritance, & to sanctify
- God is able to preserve and sustain you. Therefore lead others as God empowers you.

3. Remember That It is More Blessed to Give Than Receive:

Vs. 33-35 *"I have coveted no one's silver or gold or clothes. You yourselves know that these hands served my own needs and the men who were with me. In everything I showed you that by working hard in this way you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"*

- Paul did not covet anyone's money or clothing, neither should they
- Paul's own hands ministered to his needs and the needs of those with him.
 - *I was not a burden to you*
 - *I was not in this for material or financial gain.*
- Do NOT be motivated by material gain. Do not treat your stewardship as a license for wealth.

How often do we see that some of the big churches that have become these giant machines? Size is certainly not synonymous with corruption. But sometimes the tail begins to wag the dog.

Many televangelist will quote Jesus just as Paul did. Give & you will be blessed. Leaders today want people's gifts and they tell them to give so they'll be blessed. Paul wanted the leaders to give so the people might be blessed.

III. The Exit of Believers 36-38

Vs. 36-38 *“When he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. And they all began to weep aloud and embraced Paul, and repeatedly kissed him, grieving especially over the word which he had spoken, that they would not see his face again. And they were accompanying him to the ship.”*

Vs. 36 Says that Paul knelt down and prayed with them all.

- Isn't this a beautiful picture of friendship?
- We should always love to kneel and pray with fellow believers
- This is a privilege and all too often we treat prayer as a chore or item on a checklist.

Vs. 37 Literal translation Weeping = *“a considerable weeping of all occurred....”*

Embraced = *“they fell on him and completely*

21:1 “Parted”, “Departed”,

ESV *“Tore themselves away from the elders.....”*

I believe we should have a similar exit as believers. We should have an impact on the lives of others that reveals a void when we are gone.

This is not about building up ourselves. This is not about manufacturing a reputation for ourselves. This is about living in a way that exudes God's love that is attractive to others. This is about investing in the lives of others for the glory of God.

I. The Example for Believers

Paul's own life was an example to those he ministered to and lead. Our lives should also be examples to those around us. Our lives should point people to Christ. We should be able to say that we never failed teach or share the Word of God no matter where we were public or private.

II. The Expectation of Believers

God's expectation of us is that we would continually be on guard and be on alert. We should regularly be in the Word. We should be evaluating what people say according to the Word. We should lead others as God has empowered us and recognize that our service to others is a blessing. We should not be seeking material and monetary gain, but be motivated by the love go God.

IV. The Exit of Believers

Our exit or parting with other believers, friends, loved ones should leave an impression. Our lives should impact others so that we weep over the idea that we must wait until Heaven to see each other again.