

Farewell's Don't Have to Last Forever

Acts 20

Icebreaker: *What is the hardest part about saying “Goodbye”?*

Following the riot in Ephesus Paul traveled through Macedonia, Greece and then back through Macedonia. At Troas they stopped and spent some time with the Christians there. Paul delivered a message that went very late into the night.

Acts 20:7-12

What had they met together to do?

- Break bread—Lord’s Supper
- For an occasion to hear Paul speak

Some believe that the crowded room full of many burning lamps may have made the room stuffy enough for Eutychus to take his seat on the window sill. If Luke the physician was present with them there would be no doubt that Eutychus had actually been killed, which assures us that this was a miracle and not explained by anything else.

Besides the obvious warning not to fall asleep during one of Jim’s sermons, what other lessons can we learn from these early Christians who spent the entire night together in fellowship, breaking bread, and listening to Paul?

- We should desire to spend time with each other, studying God’s word, and breaking bread.
- Tight schedules often need to be loosened to get our spiritual needs met.

Acts 20:16-31

Where was Paul on his way to?

- Jerusalem

What does he expect to happen there?

- He will be imprisoned and face persecution

Paul knew the Ephesian Christians well. He spent three years there on his previous trip. Evidently the church grew large enough and mature enough in that time to have elders. Paul never expected to see them again and now tells them goodbye. He gives them instructions but he also gives them a warning.

What instructions does Paul give them? (20:28)

- To be shepherds and to keep watch over the flock.

What warning does Paul give them? (20:29-31)

- False teachers will come in and lead some astray

What did Paul say was his only aim? (20:24)

- To finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus had given him—the task of testifying to the good news of God’s grace.

Before we can run the race we have to understand our task. As Christians we have the same purpose as Paul—to testify to the world about the good news of God’s grace through Jesus Christ. We call that evangelism. Notice how closely Paul links finishing the race with completing the task. It makes evangelism all the more important when we realize how big a part it is in our completing the life God gave us to live.

How can you testify to the good news of God’s grace this week?

Eutychus’ death gives us an insight into what was happening with Paul and these elders—while Paul’s departure would result in death, that would not be the final chapter. Paul would have life again. Saying goodbye is not as hard when you know God will one day reunite. But it still is not easy.

If you were never going to see a loved one every again what would you want to tell them?

Acts 20:36-38

Notice the importance of prayer in this sending off on Paul’s final journey. By praying for each other, Paul is entrusting that God will take care of his church and the church is entrusting that God will take care of his apostle. In the end it will all work out according to God’s plan but the departure is still difficult.

Paul got on that ship even though he knew it would lead him to his death. *What enables a man to board a ship with that in mind?*

- Fully trusting and relying on God.

Application

What tasks do you think God would like to see you accomplish before you die?

What trials are you facing that need the prayers of your brothers and sisters?

Prayer—Pray for three things in particular:

- 1— Any prayer requests
- 2— The tasks that God has set before your group members
- 3— The trials that groups members are undergoing