

Acts 20:1-38

December 7, 1976

Again here in the twentieth chapter of Acts, there's no man living who can set the greatness of this thing like the Word sets it. Again my ability to set this is far below par, which I recognize, and yet some of the great salient truths in here are just absolutely fantastic.

After the great opportunity at Ephesus, we open with the twentieth chapter:

Acts 20:1

“and” - now

“for” - delete

Acts 20:2

“Greece” – he came back to Corinth

Acts 20:3

“when the Jews laid wait for him” - had organized a plot

“he purposed” - by divine revelation instead of going to Syria, God told him to return and go by way of the road instead of sailing to Macedonia.

These first three verses are just loaded with information. Yet, Luke passes over these three verses in an unbelievably fast way. There must have been at least nine months involved or more in the first three verses. Of all the other great things Luke hits, he by-passes all of this work in Macedonia and other places and just hits it in these three verses and tells us he spent three months in Greece, back in Corinth. I don't know why the Word of God doesn't give us more information. I really don't know. So I guess there's no use to guess. That must have been really phenomenal as he revisited all those churches and spent two or three days, or a month, or part of a month with the believers. I've often thought how tremendous that must have been: to sit in a believers meeting with the Apostle Paul teaching. I get tears in my eyes. Just to be there with Paul would have been something. There it is; three verses and tells us very little. He must have been through ten or twelve of the cities or more.

Acts 20:4

“into” - as far as

“Sopater” - this is sort of a shortened form of Sōsipater, who by the way is called the son of Purhus in one of the early church writers. He was from Berea. The believers in Berea were more noble than those in Thessalonica because they studied the Word, searched the Word.

“of” – from

Acts 20:5

“going before” – i.e. - went on ahead

“tarried” - waited

Acts 20:6

This is a “we” section. This is apparently where Luke joined.

“sailed away from Philippi” - that’s impossible because Philippi is inland about five miles. Neapolis was the port to Philippi, but that is very understandable for me. “We flew out from New Knoxville.” You really didn’t; you flew out from the airport a mile east of New Knoxville. What he’s simply saying is that the last place they really worked was Philippi and from there they left by boat. They traveled by land before, now they leave by boat.

“the days of unleavened bread” - the first day of the feast was called the Feast of the Passover, but the whole week was called the Week of Unleavened Bread.

Acts 20:7

“*day*” – is in italics – it has to be deleted

“the disciples” - the critical Greek text says “we” - no disciples mentioned; just “we.” Of course, I can understand the word “disciples” in there.

“preached” – the same word as “reasoned” in **Acts 17:2**, where it says “he reasoned with them.” As I see the teaching of God’s Word and the preaching of it, it’s the logical, spiritual, systematic, reasoning with people; putting it together for people, if that communicates to you.

“ready” - prepared

“morrow” – next day

“speech” – *logos* – the Word; the teaching of the greatness of God’s Word.

“until midnight” - In Eastern culture, this is most unusual. Eastern culture closes at sunset or dark and then everybody goes to bed. Boy, this early Church was sure something. Midnight means very, very late.

Reading from Bullinger’s notes on verse 7:

first, &c. = first day of the Sabbaths, i.e. the first day for reckoning the seven sabbaths to Pentecost. It depended upon the harvest and was always from the morrow after the weekly sabbath when the wave sheaf was presented (**Leviticus 23:15**). In **John 20:1** this was the fourth day after the crucifixion, “the Lord’s passover.

I had fully intended of working verse 7 with you tonight from one of my writings. I forget what the title of it is. What Passover Did Jesus Keep?, maybe. I just didn’t have time to work it out. But I think this is the first day of the sabbaths for reckoning the seven sabbaths to Pentecost, “upon the first of the week.”

This verse is the one that has caused the so-called “Christian” denomination wherein every Sunday they have Holy Communion. The “Church of Christ”, or sometimes called the “Christian Church” uses this verse to prove that (the disciples came together upon the first of the week to break bread), therefore every Sunday they have communion. You know of that denomination? This is the verse that they use. I do not believe that this particular verse refers at all to having communion every Sunday, but that’s what Bullinger says about it.

To me it's so simple. As far as I know, nobody else agrees with me, so I could be flagrantly wrong. But it's so simple to me. It would simply be like a man of God coming into an area and the people loved him and he was really a wonderful man of God and the kids all got together and said, "Look, let's just bring our lunch along." That's what I think it really was. I don't think it had anything to do with the last supper or the Lord's supper or anything like that. Now there isn't a commentary that agrees with me. It's interesting, because first of all I do not believe that this was necessarily Sunday that they're talking about.

And this, "they came together to break bread", to me is very logical because he's going to keep teaching until midnight. Well, what do you think he did? You know, understanding Paul, he'd go out and get a cup of coffee. I don't know why they can't just see a man walking. Paul was a human being. I can see Paul saying; "Look, go to the bathroom" can't you? I mean when you're honest about this and you are not trying to promote or promulgate a theological position. To me it's absolutely beautiful. He's going to keep talking until midnight; well really, he's going to keep going until dawn. And so what they did, they just split up every once in a while and went to the bathroom. They had food there set out for the believers. They had cookies, coffee, hot chocolate, whatever they had. To me that's what this verse is talking about. That's why I love it so much, because to me it's just so natural. It's a natural way of life. People getting together not because they are specifically religious but because they are a family and they love each other and they want to be together. So they just bring their cookies and coffee and donuts and hot chocolate.

"to break bread" - to fellowship

Going until midnight is not done in Oriental culture, but he did it. Because he just loved the people, the people loved him, the Word was so living within him, the people wanted to hear the Word, and Paul just sat there and poured out his heart for them.

Acts 20:8

"there were many lights in the upper chamber" - They brought their little oil lamps and a whole mess of candles. This was in the upper chamber. This is the third floor of an apartment building. On the first floor grandpa and grandma may have lived and that's where they did their business. They executed their daily business; selling their wares. The second floor is where the children had their apartments; the Sons who brought their wives home. The third floor was what you would call "the ballroom." It was the party room where they got together and had a great time. That's where they met. It was after dark so they brought lights along.

Acts 20:9

"sat in a window" - Now he couldn't sit in a window like you think of a window because that thing over there is not a Biblical window. A Biblical window had just a flat area and then shutters on the outside. They didn't have any glass.

"fallen into a deep sleep" - I see this same thing in the Corps, and I love it. I get blessed. It doesn't bother me any. You know like sometimes on a Sunday night and we've got a Corps meeting and you kids lie on the floor, and before you know it somebody is off sleeping. It isn't that you don't love God. This was so unusual because no teacher goes beyond dark. At dark they roll up the streets and everybody goes to bed. He was asleep and fell backwards off the window. He died.

“was taken up dead” – they picked him up. I do not know whether they brought him up to the second floor or where it happened.

Acts 20:10

By the time Paul went down they had already picked him up and I don’t know where Paul met them. It could have been the second floor, I don’t know.

“fell on him” - much like in the Old Testament; the prophet that got over the top of the child. [Elisha - **II Kings 4:34**] That’s revelation.

“embracing *him*” - he fell on him and put his arms around him. What he did between “fell on him and embraced him,” and his statement “Trouble not yourselves,” I don’t know. There’s no record. He ministered to him because the man was dead and by the time he makes this statement in **verse 10**, “Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him,” it was a miracle of healing.

Acts 20:11

come up again” - to the third loft.

If the “break bread” of **verse 7** is communion, then they had communion twice, because they came up and broke bread again in **verse 11**. I don’t think it’s holy communion at all. Golly, I can see this thing and it’s so simple: at 6:00 we eat, have a little fellowship then along toward 12:30 we’re still a little hungry. So they ate again; had a little snack time. That’s all it is. To me it’s the beauty of the family meeting, sharing not only in the Word but in the fellowship. It’s very interesting that the commentaries never seem to cover the breaking of bread in **verse 7** and the breaking of bread in the same evening in **verse 11**. So they talk about communion in **verse 7** but they somehow or other miss communion in **verse 11**. So if it’s communion in 7, it’s got to come in 11. I think we have a little more right to our opinion because of the logic of this situation.

“talked” – *homileō* - in English we have this transliterated into the word “homily.” It is really worked into the word that I understand better and that is the word homiletics. *Homileō* is the root form of the word transliterated into the homiletics. Homiletics literally means the fine art of preaching. It says in **verse 7** that he preached or reasoned with them. Homiletics is the art of preaching. An art is a learned field. You may have natural ability to paint, but the art of painting is a learning. That’s why this word, *homileō*, means so much to me; they had broken bread and eaten, he *homileō*-ed, the fine art of teaching, reasoning, working with his people a long while.

“break of day” - dawn. If we are fanatical meeting in our twigs nightly, they must have been fanatical meeting all night. They met with Paul all night.

Acts 20:12

“were not a little comforted” - means they were comforted like crazy.

They were electrified. They were excited. They were higher than a kite by two things: the miracle that had occurred when this fellow fell down and died; and by the words of Paul as he

taught the Word. That's what comforted and electrified them: the deliverance and the Word.

Acts 20:13

Notice the "we" section.

"to ship" - in other words - by ship

"to take in" - to meet

"go afoot" – this was about twenty miles

Acts 20:14

"we took him in" - we all got together

Acts 20:15

"thence" - from there

Again, what happened at all these places, I just don't know.

"next" - There are three different words for the word "next" in this verse - *epeimi* is the first one. The second is *heteros*. The third next is *echomai*. I didn't have time or I would have worked it out for you today. Seeing that they are all different electrifies my mind because every cause has an effect and every effect has a cause. There's a reason for it, and I don't know the answer to it. If I'd had time, I would have dug it to find out; there's got to be a reason.

Acts 20:16

"determined" - willed

"sail by" - miss

"hasted" - was in a hurry

I wish you would take the time and work the stuff I wrote for you on this Pentecost stuff and calendars. He was at one place for the Passover and we know that the sabbath was the day after the offering of the wave sheaf. You could figure this all out if you wanted to as to why he was in a hurry.

I forget how long it took to sail from the last location that's mentioned here at Patara [**Acts 21:1**] to Jerusalem. I believe that the reason he wanted to be at Jerusalem for the day of Pentecost is because he was carrying the collection of the saints; the abundant sharing. That would be the time when a lot of those converted Jewish believers would be there and a lot of unconverted ones. Then they would see that the body of Gentiles loved the Jewish believers because they were supporting them and that would tie the one body together. That's why I believe Paul was so excited. As far as Paul was concerned, he thought he wanted to impress those Jerusalem Jews who were born again with the Gentile love. That's why I think he got his revelation screwed up a little bit later on, too. Cause, you know something; with an abundant sharing, you don't have to impress anybody.

Acts 20:17

Now you know they could go up there may be in a day's time and come back, so it was at least the third day after that. That's the minimum that verse 18 could come to pass.

From **verse 16**:

"he would not spend the time in Asia" - He didn't want to go to Ephesus for he wanted to go on. But there is a lot more to this I'm sure, if we all knew the depth of this great stuff. Ephesus was still a hot spot; they were still shooting out their tires and the rest of the stuff.

They asked me, a little while ago back there, if when a prophet shelves himself and cops out, is it possible to come back and bounce back. It's always possible to come back. But the reason many times people who have ministries do not come back to God and the greatness of His Word is because the Adversary has so tricked them that they just don't come back. Had that old prophet come back, God would have given him revelation to help people.

We're now going to get into that section, that you well know I just wouldn't believe when I originally read it, because I just had such an opinion of Paul, that I never believed Paul ever made a mistake. But he sure did. But I want to tell you something, he bounced back and that's more than I can say for a lot of men of God. You bet your life, boy. At least Paul came back, so don't be too analytical and critical.

"elders" - *presbuteros* - which is transliterated into the English word presbyter. In other words, he called the presbyters; the leaders of the Twigs or Branches or Area. He didn't call all the disciples; he called all the leaders.

Acts 20:18

"I came into Asia" - this is at Ephesus that we're talking about

"at all seasons" - all the time

"after what manner" - how I lived with you

Acts 20:19

"many tears" - tears - in other words at times he got so concerned that he cried about the people.

"temptations" - trials - a lot of trials he had there.

"Jews" - the Jews were religious people. Did they think they were right? Yes, but they persecuted, were bad to Paul; mean.

Acts 20:20

Then comes this great twentieth verse: look at it. It sits here just magnificently.

"kept back nothing" - literally is "full diet"

The abundance of the revelation was given to Paul and recorded in Ephesus in the book of Ephesians. When Paul was in Ephesus, he gave them a full diet. He withheld nothing from them. Everything that Paul knew by revelation and from God, Paul laid his heart out to them in Ephesus. He showed it to them, he taught it publicly and he taught it in the twig meeting.

“house-to-house” - The Ohio State Government is trying to figure out whether we are entitled to not charge sales tax. The church doesn’t have to. They’re tax free. They’re trying to figure out if we are a church. If the Bible is right, we are the only one existing. That building downtown is not a church. “House to house” is the Church. I don’t care what they come up with; the Word of God still stands. If we’ve got to pay tax, we’ll just pay the stupid tax. It doesn’t make any difference to me, because nobody can hit the Word. The Word still stands and the Church was always in a house. The moment it got into a building, it was already dead. Sure, he taught publicly in the market place, other places, but also from house to house.

Acts 20:21

“testifying” – witnessing - What did he witness to them? Both of them should repent to God.

“faith” - *pistis* – believing

“toward our Lord Jesus Christ” - **Romans 10:9.**

This is what he’s telling the elders, “You know my life, you know how I witnessed, how I shared the Word, taught repentance, believing toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Acts 20:22

“And now” – as to now

Acts 20:23

“save” – except

“the Holy Ghost” – the *pneuma* the *hagion*

“witnesses” – “to me” - is added in every critical Greek text

“in every city” - boy, what fellowships those must have been as he was coming down. They had believers meetings here, there and yonder. And every time it came, up in every city. Boy, God was sure doing His best for Paul. But Paul had determined. (**verse 16**) Paul said, “I got to get the money back to Jerusalem and I’ve got to impress those people that these Gentiles are really abundantly sharing with the brethren in Jerusalem, and I’m gonna be in Jerusalem at Pentecost come hell or high water.” And in the next town; “Verily I, the spirit of the Lord, say unto thee, Paul don’t go to Jerusalem.” And the next town; “Verily I, the spirit of the Lord, say unto thee, do not go to Jerusalem.” “Every city.” Isn’t it human? Isn’t it so fantastic?

“abide” – await

Acts 20:24

If the Word of God was not God’s Word, they’d leave sections like this out. They would never present the great man of God in such a bad light. Like David screwing Bathsheba; they’d have never shown it if it wasn’t God’s Word. They’d have white-washed it. That’s only one that comes to my mind. There are hundreds of others. God’s Word just tells the truth. That’s why it’s God’s Word.

“finish my course” – is what Paul wanted to do. What did he want to do? Go to Jerusalem for

Pentecost. I do not think it has anything to do with his dying. The commentaries all say that he finished his course, his life. I don't think it has anything to do with it. He just wanted to finish getting to Jerusalem, delivering the abundant sharing. By what authority do I believe this? Because it's 10, 12, 15 years later that he dies. So what course was he trying to finish?

He doesn't particularly care about his own life; he just wants to get to Jerusalem. The spirit witnesses everywhere, "If you're gonna go there you're gonna get in the soup." But he said, "I don't care. I want to go to Jerusalem to deliver the abundant sharing that they had collected." Outside of The Way Ministry, nobody believes what I've just told you, that I know of. They all think finishing his course is his death because later on in one of the Epistles he says, "I've finished my course, I fought a good fight." [II Timothy 4:7] But, you see, you can finish a lot of courses, can't you? That one was his last course. This one here is the Jerusalem course.

"received" – *lambano*-ed

gospel" - good news - still, his gospel was the good news of the grace of God.

Acts 20:25

"of God" - delete

"shall see my face no more" - the commentaries and the Bible scholars say that he's saying to them, "You'll never see me again. I'm going to die." I don't believe it. To "see my face no more" does not mean they will never see him again. The "more" is, "You'll no longer see my face now. I'm going up to Jerusalem; I'm splittin' out." That's all it means. It's the same as I would say to you when I leave for Kansas Sunday night, "You will see my face no longer." It just means that I'm going to Kansas. But by God's mercy and grace, I'm going to be back the following Sunday and then you're going to see my face. I believe Paul went to Ephesus later, after his imprisonment in Rome.

"more" - longer

Acts 20:26

"Wherefore I take you to record this day" - wherefore I want to establish this in your hearts again

"I *am* pure from the blood of all" - In other words, I haven't taken advantage of anybody, I haven't hurt anybody, the Word of God I've preached has done nothing but set people free, it hasn't split up families; I haven't told the kids to not go home to dad and mom; the whole trip, I'm innocent.

"take you to record" – am witnessed to by you

Acts 20:27

"counsel" - will - in **verse 20** he said he gave them a "full diet."

Acts 20:28

This is a real sharp and great message. First thing he says, "take heed unto yourself," secondly, "and to all of the flock." You don't first take heed to the believers. First you take heed to yourself; am I walking on the Word, am I believing God, am I right on, then the flock.

“flock” - You can have a flock of geese. You can have a flock of ducks. Geese are not ducks and ducks are not geese. The born-again believers are not sheep. Israel is sheep; the believers of Israel are sheep. Jesus Christ was the good shepherd to Israel. He is our brother, the first begotten of the dead. The shepherd is not brother to the sheep. He is not saying that we are Israel. He just says, “take heed to all the flock.” The flock who? The flock, meaning: that body; the called out body, of believers. The called out body of believers is a flock like the called out sheep are a flock; like geese are a flock of geese and ducks are a flock of ducks. All the Bible commentators confuse us with sheep. It can’t be, because the Word said we are of one body. Christ is our brother. The shepherd is never brother to the sheep.

“over” – in – “in which” not “over” - As a servant you have to be a part of that flock; you have heart pressure when they have heart pressure; when they are persecuted, you are persecuted; when they weep, you weep; when they rejoice you rejoice. You’re “in,” you’re not over. Everybody wants to be “over” so they can pull the strings; say Herman, you jump, and Herman jumps. I don’t believe that.

“the Holy Ghost” – the *pneuma* the *hagion*

“overseer” - *episkopos* - from which we get our word Episcopal, and the Episcopal church has ruler ship called “bishops.” The word *episkopos* is bishop.

I Timothy 3:1-2:

This *is* a true [faithful] saying [*logos*], “If a man desire the office of a bishop [*episkopos*]...”

A bishop [*episkopos*] then...

“to feed” - not to criticize, not to destroy, not to beat the hell out of - to feed -You are a part of that flock. Your rulership of that flock or your shepherding of that flock is “in.” And the “in” is to feed, not to destroy, not to injure, not to hurt; it’s to feed.

In **verse 17** it says he called the elders. The word “elders” is the word “presbyters.” In **verse 28** he calls these same ones overseers; bishops. That is the proof from the Word that whatever an elder is, a bishop is. “Elder” is the old Hebrew (Aramaic) word for the Greek word of “bishop.” In the Old Testament, they were elders. Under Israel (Aramaic), they were elders. Under the Greeks as they came along, and that word took effect, they were bishops. An elder was nothing but a believer with a rulership responsibility. A bishop was nothing but a believer with a rulership responsibility. And the rulership was “in,” to feed. He was like the Branch leader, or Twig coordinator.

Every person in that Twig is a believer; the Twig coordinator is a believer. That’s as high as you can go in the Word of God; that’s the biggest you can get is ever be a believer - that’s to be born again. Nobody ever goes any bigger. I’m not any bigger than that, neither are you. Then whenever something occurs which looks like it’s higher, it’s not higher spiritually, it’s only higher from a rulership position that makes you more responsible to the believers. That’s why it’s called a *doulos*.

In the Roman Catholic Church at least they are right-on on this particular thing. The highest you can be in the Roman Catholic Church is a priest. A bishop is a priest with more rulership

responsibility. Archbishop; more rulership, more responsibility, he's still a priest and so on up the line to the Pope. The Pope is nothing but a priest with more responsibility. The Episcopal church has the same policy. The highest you can ever be in "the body" is a believer. That makes us all the same. You may have a little more responsibility as a Twig coordinator, but the more responsibility you have, the greater your service has to be to your fellow men. If you are a Twig coordinator, you've got to take the responsibility of 10, 12, or 15 people, and you bleed your heart out for them; you die for them if necessary, you stay up all night if necessary. They can go to bed and sleep, but not you, if it's necessary. And you just keep taking on added responsibility. If you are a Branch leader, you're responsible for more people, if you're an Area coordinator, more. If you are a Limb coordinator, I don't know how you ever get any sleep. That's what the greatness of that verse says.

This thing is absolutely fantastic here in the 20th Chapter; the patience, the love, the accuracy, the greatness of all this stuff. And how Paul just honestly opens his heart, and the revelation is there to show the greatness of all this.

"feed" – is the word "shepherd" - I understand the word "feed." I think it's a great word. But if you understand the word "shepherd", it means more than to feed. It means; when the adversary attacks my believer, I beat him in the head for the believer. I stand with my people. I fight for them. I don't just give you food; I fight for you. That's the word "shepherd", and that's why I think the word "shepherd" belongs there. It's deeper than feed. To feed, you just throw them the grain. But when you shepherd the flock, you not only give them the food, but you fight for them; you stand for them; you battle for them.

That's the work of the ministry of the one body in leadership positions; you fight for you Twig. Your Twig member may not always be right, but you let nobody from the outside take a crack at him. You beat the hell out of them. That's right. You stand for your people. You fight for your people. That doesn't mean you agree with their wrong, but you certainly don't agree with the adversary hitting them. You fight for your people. You shepherd them. You watch over them. You bind up their wounds.

Someday, if you ever get to see this, it'll make you a hell of a lot tenderer than you've ever been before. You'll stop all your criticism and all your crap and you'll start just really loving people in what I call "In spite of." That's the responsibility and it's in the Word. And if you don't obey the Word, that's sin. Doing contrary to the Word; if you don't fight for your Twig, that's sin. You shepherd the church of God, and I think that's a beautiful trick.

"God" – what does Bullinger say about this? Read it to me he's all screwed up:

Some texts read "Lord", but Alford gives good reasons for rejecting the change, due to Arian and Socinian attempts against the Lord's Deity.

Bullinger believed that Jesus was God. The texts are right. Bullinger is wrong. Some texts give "Lord." I'll go with "Lord" because I know Jesus was not God. So; "to shepherd the church of the Lord" - The word "Lord" – confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord; as your leader. **[Romans 10:9]** It represents his leadership. He's made you to be bishop, to shepherd the church of the Lord; those who have confessed with their mouth Jesus as Lord. That's what we shepherd. That's why I know it'll go with that text.

"He" - Jesus Christ

I Corinthians 6:19-20:

What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost [*pneuma hagion*] *which is* in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?
For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

You are bought with a price. Who paid the price? Jesus Christ. God so loved that He gave His only begotten son, but the only begotten son paid the price. He laid down his life. He was afflicted with our disease. He paid the price.

“purchased” - paid for

Acts 20:29 - Here comes revelation must have just shocked the socks off them. This is why I can see them, later on, hanging on Paul's neck and saying, “Oh, Paul, we're never going to do that. We're never going to cop out on what you taught us. We're never going to argue with each other. We're going to stay faithful in the Word.”

“for” – delete

“I know this” – he could not have known it by his sense knowledge, so if he knew it, he had to know it by revelation because it's future.

“grievous wolves” - these grievous wolves would be leaders who will tear the flock apart; split the flock. The grievous part is they're going to go back to their legalism. “Why do you allow your young people to live, 2 girls in one room in an apartment and 2 boys in another room in the same apartment?” (This is what they wanted to know at an adult meeting that Dr. had attended.) Hell, you can live 15 miles apart and screw. But you can live in the same apartment and walk like brothers and sisters. I'll stake my life on my kids. I fight for them. I just believe in my Way people. I just believe that God's given me the best people in the world, both men and women.

The word “grievous” is the word “oppressive” and the word “oppressive” is always legalism; put you back under the law, one thing or another. Did you wash your hands before you prayed? You can't garner grain on the sabbath. You can't eat the shew bread in the temple. Well, David did. Jesus Christ harvested the grain. They said he couldn't do it; he did it anyway. You'd never believe this would happen in the great city of the Ephesians. Two years and three months, all Asia heard the Word of God. The greatest revelation ever given was to the Ephesians. And yet the oppressive, the legalistic group are going to come in like wolves, not like shepherds to feed the flock, but like wolves to tear it apart, and they think they're right-on; they think they're doing God a favor.

Acts 20:30

“also of your own selves” – “of your own selves also” – “also” has to go after “selves.” He's talking to the elders, the bishops.

“shall” - will

Now I want to tell you why I really believe he by-passed Ephesus. Because Paul just didn't want to go back in and be surrounded by a bunch of the church people and everybody else, and

have to tell the leadership what he saw spiritually was going to happen. Now they could have avoided it; revelation changes when circumstances change. But Paul saw the way they were going and if they kept going this way, that's what's going to happen. And I believe that's the major reason he by-passed Ephesus, got to Miletus, and sent word to the leadership and said come on over to Miletus; I want to talk to you.

Acts 20:31

“watch” - **I Peter 5:5b-9a:**

...Yea, all *of you* be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:

Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

Whom resist stedfast in the faith [believing - *pistis*]...

“watch” – “by staying put on the Word I taught you”

“three years” - We know its two years and three months. Three months he went into the synagogues, two years in the school of Tyrannus. What it's simply saying is that whole period in three years.

“with tears” - in other words, he bled out his heart. He taught them the greatness of the Word even to the end where at times he cried about the situations.

Acts 20:32

“commend” - give

“word of His grace” – *logos* of His grace - He has just told them back in **verse 29** that what he knows is that there are going to be oppressive wolves, but his whole love and believing is they'll change their attitude; that they'll walk by the Word of grace, not the oppressiveness of legalism, but in the light of the grace of God; the *logos* of His grace.

“able to build you up” - people, the only thing I ever see that builds people up is the grace of God. The legalism always tears people down; always makes you feel like a heel. The grace of God, even though you blow it, makes you feel like you want to succeed; you want to walk; you want to move; you want to go.

“you” - delete

“them which are sanctified” - those who are set apart - the sanctified ones; the believers

Acts 20:33

“apparel” - fine clothing

“coveted” - earnestly desired

The reason fine clothing is aligned with silver or gold is because much of the wealth of an

individual was put in clothing. They would wear three, four, or five thicknesses of garments, because that was their wealth. They would have gold strands in their clothing, that's how they kept their gold. They wore their wealth in their clothing many times; the gold strands on it; the stones they'd put it on their clothing. They'd put it underneath and the only way you could get it from them, is you have to kill them or do something.

Acts 20:34

"these hands" - my own hands

"my necessities" - my needs. He worked to get his physical needs met. He made saddles and sold the saddles to get the money so that he could teach God's Word. There's a record where he received offerings from somebody, but he did not rely upon the offerings to live. When the offerings were there, he'd praise the Lord. When they weren't there, he just made another saddle. You see why I've done with all my heart the best I could, according to the Word, to set up The Way Tree with the Twig, the Branch, the Limb: so that our people get a job, work. W.O.W.'s - I want them to work. It's just the Word.

"to them that were with me" - he not only ministered to his own needs, but he shared what he made with the rest of them; needs of others. Boy, no wonder this man had such a tremendous life. He knew the law, kept it; spiritual laws.

Acts 20:35

"shewed you all things" - taught you all this

"so laboring" - work this way - of verse 34 "to them that were with me"

"weak" - this word intrigued me spiritually, because other places it's translated "sick." I do not believe that's what it is. One text that I read once (and I don't know where it is, so we'll just keep looking; we'll find it someday), it could be translated "aged." That's what I believe it is. I believe it's the Church's responsibility to take care of their aged people. When my earthly daddy is 65-90, and he no longer can work, then he doesn't become the property of social security, or of the government. The Church takes care of its people. I, as a son, take care of my father. Then we as sons of God take care of the fathers who have no children to take care of them, or of those fathers whose children don't want to take care of them. You're going to have an awful time instituting this one in our culture. But that's the Word, people, whether we like it or don't like it.

"how he said" - It is not written anywhere - "how he said" - that's why it's a proverb.

It's more blessed to give because, when I receive, for what I do for you, that's only one person involved. But when I give of that abundance that I have received, I bless you and you and you and you. So I get blessed back four times. Here I only got blessed once. That's why it's more blessed to give than to receive. That's the greatness of what he told those elders and bishops.

Acts 20:36

That was just a custom he followed. When Jesus went into the Garden of Gethsemane, he kneeled [Luke 22:41], and other places where it says they kneeled. He kneeled down with them and prayed with them all. I've often wondered what that meant. Did it mean that he started over here and prayed with him; prayed with him; prayed with him; prayed with him;

prayed with him; prayed over each one of them? I'd like to think so; I don't know. But when he prayed, they all wept sore.

Acts 20:37

"fell on Paul's neck" - I can see this; they said, "Oh, Paul, you know we love you. You're our father in the Word. We'll never kick this thing in the teeth; we'll stay put."

"kissed him" - on both cheeks and hugged him - the great culture.

Acts 20:38

"the words" - *logos* – the Word - not plural; not words. It's not *rhema* it's *logos* – the Word.

"no more" - no longer - he was splitting out; going to Jerusalem.

Boy, people, there are just no words in my vocabulary to tell you how tremendously great that chapter is. God's just going to have to teach it to you. You're just going to have to see it in the innermost part of your own heart: that a man would have such love for his people that he would tell them the truth of the revelation that he saw. I want to tell you, Paul loved those men. They were his best leaders. They were his Twig coordinators, his Branches in Ephesus. He had picked them because he set the elders in the Church, the Word says. He picked them. And for Paul to have to tell them what he did here; I can just see his old heart busting; same as I can see the Lord Jesus' heart busting when Judas wouldn't respond. That's the greatness of free will. The family will always be there, but the household will not. And the strength of the greatness of God is in the household.

That's **Acts 20**, at least in part, bless your heart.