

Series: Acts 10: One More From The Road

Message: Week 5- Notes from the road (the danger of falling asleep in church!)

Date: February 6, 2022

- **Hello everyone! Today is week FIVE in our journey with Paul on his third missionary journey.**
- **If you missed last week, we covered a LOT- big story about a big riot, and with a takeaway I want to re-affirm as we begin today, and I'm adding an important thing I didn't emphasize last week.**

When attacked, the church in Acts never defended itself through protest, political actions, or attacking those in opposition. Likewise, the church didn't attempt to change the surrounding culture through moral imposition or coercion. Rather, this first community of believers profoundly influenced the surrounding culture through the faithful witness of the Gospel, the full message God's Grace, and the testimony of their own changed lives.

- **This is one of the great meta-narratives of Acts. We see the Holy Spirit, working through these first believers, to bear witness to the gospel and demonstrate the truth of Jesus through the testimony of how their lives were changed. Miracles? Yes... but the greatest authentication of who Jesus is and the good news of God's Grace was the transformation of these believers lives.**
- **TODAY, we're following Paul as he leaves Ephesus and makes most of the journey back to Jerusalem.**
- **As we do, we will see three key realities of how this change and transformation in the believers lives happened- what it looked like- and how speaks into our lives as followers of Christ today.**
- **OH, and yes, we will see the danger of falling asleep in church! BUT BEFORE WE GO THERE, Today is Sunday, FEBRUARY 6th, 2022. PE, TO, thanks...**
- **OK- we pick the story up in Ephesus, in the days following the great riot we explored last week. In this first segment of Paul's journey home, he travels..**

✠ From Ephesus to Troas

Acts 20:1-6 *When the uproar had ended, Paul sent for the disciples and, after encouraging them, said goodbye and set out for Macedonia. ² He traveled through that area, speaking many words of encouragement to the people, and finally arrived in Greece, ³ where he stayed three months.*

- **Luke's travel account here is compressed. If you look at MAP, you'll see this journey likely took Paul north through the eastern edge of ancient Asia, to Troas, then sailing across the Aegean sea to Philippi, then south through the major cities of Macedonia, including Thessalonica and Berea. This leg of the journey took some time, and its likely Paul wrote 2 CORINTHIANS while in the region of Macedonia.**
- **From here Paul continues south into Greece, probably the region of Achaia. Luke doesn't tell us where Paul stayed for three months, but it almost certainly was CORINTH. It was during this time in Corinth that Paul wrote ROMANS. This was the winter of 57-78 AD. As a historical marker, back in Rome, the young (and insane) Emperor Nero has been on the throne for about three years.**
- **Paul's journey thus far from Ephesus has taken between 18 months and two years.**

- **One thing we know about this journey that ISN'T in Acts is told us in both 2nd COR and ROMANS- As Paul travels he is taking up an offering for the church in Jerusalem, to support the apostles and believers there. SO, after wintering in Corinth, Paul prepares to head toward Israel, but there is a complication..**

^{3b}But because some Jews had plotted against him just as he was about to sail for Syria, he decided to go back through Macedonia. ⁴ He was accompanied by Sopater son of Pyrrhus from Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, Gaius from Derbe, Timothy also, and Tychicus and Trophimus from the province of Asia. ⁵ These men went on ahead and waited for us at Troas. ⁶ But we sailed from Philippi after the Festival of Unleavened Bread, and five days later joined the others at Troas, where we stayed seven days.

- **It's interesting that Luke goes to the effort to not only give us the names of Paul's traveling companions, but also where there are from. These men represent almost all of the regions where Paul has traveled and planted churches in his three journeys. This is significant, and I'll come back to it in a minute...**
- **SO, now we have arrived at Troas, where things get interesting... Lets see...**

✠ What happened in Troas

Acts 20:7-12 On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight. ⁸ There were many lamps in the upstairs room where we were meeting. ⁹ Seated in a window was a young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep as Paul talked on and on. When he was sound asleep, he fell to the ground from the third story and was picked up dead. ¹⁰ Paul went down, threw himself on the young man and put his arms around him. "Don't be alarmed," he said. "He's alive!" ¹¹ Then he went upstairs again and broke bread and ate. After talking until daylight, he left. ¹² The people took the young man home alive and were greatly comforted.

- **SO- the obvious lesson here is that if you fall asleep in during a sermon, YOU WILL DIE! No, just kidding.**
- **Imagine this scene. Paul's been in town for one week and he's leaving the next day. Luke tells us the evening began as the broke bread together. SOME traditions almost always interpret the phrase "broke bread" to mean they celebrated communion. But the text really doesn't support this. They may have, but the emphasis is on the community that exists here- the believers enjoyed a meal together, and then settled in to listen to Paul's teaching.**
- **The room was lit with candles, and as the night progressed the room may have become hazy with scent and smoke. Combined with the earlier meal, this wasn't a formula for a teenage boy to stay awake. Luke tells us he was 'sinking' into a deep sleep. YOU CAN RELATE! You want to stay awake, you're battling with fatigue, but finally sleep wins. I CAN SEE THIS when it happens!**
- **IN any case, poor Eutycus falls asleep, falls out of the window, probably from 20-25 feet, and is killed.**
- **FOR US, knowing the whole story, this scene is somewhat humorous. But imagine this for those people- this is a terrible tragedy, a nightmare. But Paul runs to the boy, throws himself upon him, and God restores the boy's life.**
- **THIS IS ONE of the greatest miracles in all of acts. There are SEVEN accounts of people being resurrected from the dead in the NT, and all of them were temporary, except for Jesus. Eutycus is the last of these miracles, and the last miracle God does through Paul in the book of Acts.**

- **BUT AS AMAZING as Eutycus's resurrection is, it is NOT the most important thing we see in this story. WILL COME BACK TO THAT.**
-
- **Lets finish this part of Paul's journey, as he island hops across the Aegean sea, going from...**

✠ Troas to Miletus

Acts 20:13-16 We went on ahead to the ship and sailed for Assos, **(port just south of Troas)** where we were going to take Paul aboard. He had made this arrangement because he was going there on foot. ¹⁴ When he met us at Assos, we took him aboard and went on to Mitylene **(main city on larger island of Lesbos)**. ¹⁵ The next day we set sail from there and arrived off Chios **(island)**. The day after that we crossed over to Samos **(also an island)**, and on the following day arrived at **Miletus (port city south of Ephesus)**. ¹⁶ Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus to avoid spending time in the province of Asia, for he was in a hurry to reach Jerusalem, if possible, by the day of Pentecost.

- **If you've been with us for our entire journey through Acts, you may ask, "Why the sudden detail?" Why important? Well, two possible reasons.**
- **FIRST clue is the personal pronoun WE. Luke has personally rejoined the traveling part, and he is now writing from a first person account.**
- **But from a larger perspective, this detail (including the names Luke gave us earlier) is a strong argument for the HISTORICITY- or historical accuracy and trustworthiness- of Acts, and of Luke as a historian.**
- **OK- we'll leave Paul and his companions here in Miletus. What I want to do now is make some notes from the road... three observations from today's text, and that also are consistent themes from the entire book of Acts...**

Notes from the road...

- **FIRST, we see here...**

✠ The importance of ALL believers to God's work through the CHURCH

- **Luke mentions seven traveling companions with Paul: Sopater, Aristarchus, Secundus, Gaius, Timothy, Tychicus, and Trophimus. Luke also tells us where they are from- Again, why the detail?**
- **Luke is not only being historically accurate, he is emphasizing how the growth of the church is NOT just about Paul! All of these men, and the believers in their home communities of faith- all of these disciples were essential to God's work.**
- **YES, Paul and the other apostles had unique roles. But Paul was no more essential to God's plan than any of these men, or any of the women Luke has told us about along the journey.**
- **In Ephesus, Paul was the one preaching everyday in the hall of Tyrannus, but it was hundreds, if not thousands, of unnamed (to us) believers who took the gospel message back to their homes and hometowns, transforming a region Paul himself was scarcely able to enter.**
- **It was while Paul was in Ephesus that he wrote to the Corinthian church, saying "Now YOU are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it!"**
- **IT IS A MYSTERY why God chooses to work this way, but his plan to bring LIFE to the people of the world always has been, and is to this day, through the CHURCH. Through the**

community of disciples who understand that they are an essential part of God's plan to bring hope, life, love, and the message of the Gospel into their community of influence.

Ephesians 1:22-23 *And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, ²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.*

- **WE- all of us- are Christ's body, His presence, in our world. IT IS THROUGH US, faithful disciples, that Christ's presence will fill this world.**
- **This leads to our second observation...**

† The importance of the church as a **COMMUNITY** of Christ followers.

- **When Paul and his team arrived in Troas, what did they do? They sought out the other believers, and they gathered together. They broke bread- they shared a meal... but more importantly, they shared their LIVES. This is one of the greatest themes in all of Acts, and indeed in the New Testament- our calling as disciples to experience our faith in community, as the church.**
- **Of course, without question, the Holy Spirit works through us as individuals- but Biblical Christianity is NOT an individualistic faith. We are designed, and called, to be integral and active within the community of believers, the CHURCH, whatever it may look like. Biblically, this is how we grow- this is how we are spiritually healthy, this is how we support and care for one another- and this is the foundation from which we are a transforming presence in the broader community around us.**
- **THIRD OBSERVATION- we see this in the story of Eutychus.**

† The importance and centrality of **GOD'S WORD**

- **I'm drawing here from Theologian Darryl Bock, author of my primary scholarly commentary I use in my own study.**
- **As a pastor, one of the highest priorities for Paul is that his people will be equipped theologically and spiritually to persevere after he is gone. In a very real sense, this is Paul's great legacy. YOU SEE, his passion wasn't to leave behind a monument to himself. In the first generations of the church there were no church buildings named after the apostles- that all came much later.**
- **FOR PAUL, his great legacy was the thousands of believers who were a monument to GOD by their faithfulness.**
- **A central- and essential- part of how these believers became faithful and healthy disciples is through their eagerness to hear and grow in the WORD OF GOD.**
- **The believers in Troas knew Paul was going to leave the next day, and so they packed themselves into the largest room in the house and listened to what may have been Paul's longest sermon ever.**
- **THEN, Eutychus falls out of the window, dies, and is resurrected by God through Paul. BUT HERE'S WHAT WE CAN'T MISS- the greatest miracle here is not the resurrection of Eutychus. IT IS THAT THIS GROUP OF BELIEVERS WERE SO EAGER TO RECEIVE GOD'S WORD that they stayed up with Paul all night in order to do so.**

- *It is common to hear people ask “Why doesn’t God still do miracles today like we see in Acts”. But this is to miss the greater point from the book of Acts.*
- *You see, WE ARE THE MIRACLE waiting to happen, as God calls us to BE HIS BODY as a community of believers, and calls us into a sacrificial eagerness to mature as disciples through His Word- and how the RICHNESS- and challenge- of God’s Word bears fruit through the transformation of our mind, our wills, and emotions... how we think, feel, and act... REFINING us one step at a time into the nature and character of God.*

✠ *As the church, being a community, a family, is in our very spiritual DNA. A sacred way God calls us to experience this community is through gift of COMMUNION. In Communion, we proclaim and celebrate our union with Christ. An essential way we experience our union with Christ is through our union with one another.*

- *In our Services here on Sunday, we will be celebrating communion together. I’m not going to lead you through communion here, but I greatly encourage you to do so yourself- you don’t need me to do it for you.*
- *At this time, I encourage you to pause the video, and gather something to use for the cup and the bread. You could use wine and matza, if you happen to have this in your home, but it could really be anything. The physical substance is not what’s important here, but the orientation of our heart and mind toward God.*
- *Also, get your Bible if you haven’t done so, and turn with me to Luke 22. I want to share with you from this scripture, and then, in your own time, you can use this scripture to receive communion there in your own home.*
- *Ready? This is Luke’s accounting of the Passover evening Jesus spent with his disciples. Paul’s evening with the disciples in Troas is now about 27 years in the future. We pick up the story in Luke 22:7...*

Luke 22:7-24

⁷ Then came the day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. ⁸ Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, “Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover.”

⁹ “Where do you want us to prepare for it?” they asked.

¹⁰ He replied, “As you enter the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him to the house that he enters, ¹¹ and say to the owner of the house, ‘The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’ ¹² He will show you a large room upstairs, all furnished. Make preparations there.”

¹³ They left and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover.

¹⁴ When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. ¹⁵ And he said to them, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. ¹⁶ For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God.”

¹⁷ After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, “Take this and divide it among you. ¹⁸ For I tell you I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.”

- *The following scripture is the focus we use in our celebration of communion, as we allow Jesus himself to lead us to receive the bread and the cup.*

¹⁹ And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.”

²⁰ In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.

²¹ But the hand of him who is going to betray me is with mine on the table. ²² The Son of Man will go as it has been decreed. But woe to that man who betrays him!” ²³ They began to question among themselves which of them it might be who would do this.

²⁴ A dispute also arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest.

- **This last part here is strangely encouraging to me. RIGHT HERE, in what may have been the most important and intimate evening Jesus ever spent with his disciples, they seem to have completely MISSED IT. Jesus comment about being betrayed completely throws them off, and with the next breath they are arguing about their own glory.**
- **JESUS IS ON THE VERGE of sacrificing himself, and they seem to be obsessed with themselves.**
- **AND YET, Jesus loves them. He is patient with them. And he GOES TO THE CROSS FOR THEM, and for us.**
- **IN OUR OWN LIVES, it is SO EASY to MISS how God is loving us and seeking to teach us, mature us, and draw us closer to himself. We are so easily distracted! AND YET, KNOWING THIS, Jesus still loves us, us patient with us, and gave himself for us.**
- **Friends, if we can even start to grasp the magnitude of what we see here, this ISN'T a truth that will lead us to passivity, but TO OUR KNEES in awe and worship.**
- **AMAZING LOVE! HOW CAN IT BE, that you my King would die for me! AMAZING LOVE, I know it's true... GOD.. JESUS... may it be our JOY, our EAGERNESS, to honor you.**
- **My friends, I invite you to receive communion in your own time of worship. I'll see you again next week**