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Farewell Encouragement
Acts 20:1-12

If you knew that tomorrow morning, Monday morning you would have to say goodbye to your family, your friends, your brothers and sisters in Christ here at our church. You would be leaving knowing somehow that in the back of your mind this may well be the final time on this earth you speak to them. How would you spend this afternoon. How would you choose to spend this evening? Time is short. What would you do together? What would you want to be sure to say to them, to pass on to them? Would you have any regrets for things you haven't done or said that you wanted to? You will soon be gone and yet you know they need to be encouraged and challenged. What are those things you could do or say that would be of encouragement to them?

Captain of the Space Shuttle, Discovery? _____ Husband was a strong follower of Jesus Christ. He knew the job he had was risky and filled with danger. He knew that when he kissed his wife and kids goodbye and took the elevator ride into the cockpit of the shuttle that it could be his last goodbye. He knew that life could be short. He lived with the distinct possibility that he was saying his final goodbyes. For him it happened to be his last goodbye. The kids would never see their daddy again. If you died this afternoon would you have said all the things you wanted to say of encouragement to those you love?

How would I live my life if I realized how short life really is? How would I treat those I love? How would I talk with them differently? How would I work to intentionally encourage them and build strength into their lives? We all need encouragement don't we? I sure do. I get down at times. I get frustrated. I lose perspective. I lose heart. At times I feel courage slip away and doubt come creeping in.

In this morning's study, the Apostle Paul is saying goodbye to his believer friends at Troas. He somehow knows that God is drawing him to a final mission that ends up in Rome. He seems to know that the mission God has called him to will not be easy. It will be filled with danger and prison and much affliction. Yet, before he leaves he wants to come alongside and build strength into these believers, to encourage and exhort them. This morning we will read as Paul encourages others and perhaps it will encourage and challenge us as well, and infect us with the desire to encourage still others.

Turn with me in your Bibles to the book of Acts, chapter 20. We will be reading a story about a guy who falls asleep in church while the Apostle Paul was preaching. Its encouraging to me that if someone fell asleep even when the great Apostle Paul was preaching then I don't feel quite so bad when several of you doze off now that then. Be assured I will do my best to keep you awake. I do not think the word of God is boring and it is a crime when preachers make it so. But I also know that there are times when the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak...as I too have slept through a few sermons in my time. I trust there will be no Eutychuses here this morning. Lets read together Acts 20:1-12 (READ)

This passage is sandwiched by encouragement. In v.1 and in 2 we see the Greek word for encouragement or exhortation is Parakaleo. That means to come alongside to encourage, to challenge, to build strength into by applying revealed truth to life. Counselors who can skillfully extract the principles found in the Bible and show people how they can employ these principles in their life have that gift of Parakaleo. It can be a warning, a kind word or encouraging comment. Paul does this all through the passage here and then we find down in v.12 that the believers in Troas left very encouraged. Literally the text says the people left parakaleoed (encouraged) and not moderately. The people were greatly encouraged. What encourages you in your walk with Christ?

I'm encouraged by those people who help me see God's perspective in the riotous times of life. By someone who comes along and shows me what God is doing when life gets dangerous and frustrating and confusing. When someone comes alongside and points out how God has been at work. Shows me where God's thread of mercy and protection and provision has been weaving its way through my life. That's encouraging to me. That is what Paul is doing in v.1 and 2. It says that after the big riot in Ephesus where the believers were in danger of their life as the people mobbed in the Ephesus theater possibly a group 25,000 strong. Traveling companions Gaius and Aristarchus held and harassed by this group and the future looked grim...but God used a pagan government official to step in and calm the crowd and protect the believers there. Paul buys up this teachable moment right after the uproar is ceased to parakaleo, to exhort and encourage the believers. I think that Paul reminded them to expect opposition when the gospel goes out to be sure...but also expect God's peace and courage in the middle of the riots of life. Expect that God will provide for you. For our sufficiency is not in ourselves but it comes from God. And when we are weak, then He is made strong. Paul encourages and helps them see God's perspective in a riotous fearful time of life. I need that. I am so encouraged when someone comes alongside of me and reminds me in the midst of my doubt and frustration and gloom and God is still at work. Reminds me to look at the events of the world with a biblical perspective. See. Look there. God has given peace. God has provided that friend. God has provided a roof over your head. God gave you that scripture truth in time of need. Look. I'm here God gave me! See that mercy. See that protection. See that provision. I am encouraged by people who help me see God's perspective in the riotous times of life. Are you doing that for other people? In order to do that you must yourself have an eternal perspective and believe that God really does know what He is doing and is not in heaven wringing his hands in worry and fear of what is going on down here? Are you buying

up those teachable moments with your kids when life is confusing and frustrating and difficult. Your fellow workers? If we are going to be doing this, it all means we need to be listening to God. Who can I encourage? What word of strength building am I to pour in? Who God where? Teachable moments? I'm ready.

I'm encouraged not only when someone comes alongside and helps me regain God's perspective in a riotous time. I'm also encouraged when someone simply comes alongside and pours into me what God has poured into them. When someone shares with me what God has been teaching them, what they have learned from the scriptures...I'm encouraged. I see Paul did this to a group of guys that look like kind of a traveling seminary group. V.4 lists a group of men that Paul is traveling with. Paul had just spent three years in Greece and Macedonia with the purpose of encouraging the churches, giving out much paralaleo v.2 and asking for financial help to take to the needy church in Jerusalem that had been hit by some rough economic times. These men are all leaders from various geographical areas. Various Ages, backgrounds and ethnicity. And here they are specifically named and Paul is one who is encouraging by pouring into them what God has poured into him. I guess what is encouraging to me about this mention is that this roving seminary group does seem to be from such a diverse background, yet they are all on the team. I read a name of Aristarchus, whose name means, best and ruler. It comes from our English word Aristocracy, Aristocrat. He probably came from the upper levels of society to named that. Standing next to him is a guy named Secundus. Or "The second one". It is quite probable that this guy was a son of a slave. Often in the ANE slaves would not bother to name their children other than Primus, the first one. Secundus the second kid or Tertius the third child. I can't tell you for sure that Aristarchus was a rich kid or Secundus was a slaves son. But I do know that Timothy was a young half breed mix of Jew and Gentile and Paul had no qualms whatever of mentoring him. Or

even the runaway slave named Onesimus. The point that Paul wasn't prejudice against the people God chose to use. Paul was an extremely well-connected, well-educated man but when He stepped over the line to follow Jesus, He understood that anyone can be on God's team...and that means anyone no matter race, background, color of skin, gender, family, education. Anyone with a heart to follow God is welcome on the team. That is going to be encouraging for most of the people here who were not born with the silver spoon in our mouths. And for those who were born into wealth and privilege you are welcome too. Galatians 3:28 "For there is neither Jew nor Gentile, slave nor free, male nor female for you are all one in Christ Jesus." If you belong to Christ then you are in. I'm encouraged just knowing that I'm welcome on the team and wanted. Here Paul makes a statement with his actions, "I don't care who you are or where you're from or where you went to school, or never did go. You have a heart for following God...then let's go." Paul knew that he was in debt up to his eyeballs with the spiritual wisdom and understanding that God had poured into him and he took every opportunity to pass on what God had poured in. Am I doing that? Are you encouraging your friend, your family the woman here at church...by coming alongside and pouring into them what God has poured into you? That is discipleship. If you have been here any length of time you too are in debt up to your eyeballs in spiritual understanding and wisdom...where are you giving it away. Where are you spending yourself, a quarter here. A dollar there. 20 bucks there. Who is it that you are right now pouring yourself into? If you can't come up with any name then you need to go talk to God about what you need to be doing with that. Who is pouring into you? Who is mentoring you? Maybe you need to pursue that with someone. We are to be passing on what we have been entrusted with II Tim 2:1. Discipleship. Do it. And receive it. I find great encouragement in passing on what I've been entrusted.

Not only am I encouraged when people come alongside and help me see God's perspective in the riotous times of life. Not only am I encouraged when a brother comes alongside of me and pours into me what God has poured into them. I am encouraged when I am infected by a sense of urgency, a passion for the lost, a sense of mission, a desire to fulfill the purpose that God has called. If we can infect someone else with a passion for doing what Christ has called us to do, that is tremendously encouraging. I love being around people who are excited about what God is doing through them in the kingdom. Last Sunday I was stoked to hear John Greholven talk about Open house ministry and what they are doing and how God has crafted him perfectly for that place. How they refuse to compromise and stand for truth and total goal is to lead people to follow Jesus. And it's really working. People from all over the world are coming to Vancouver to see what it is that works so well...and Jesus stands in the center of it. I love to hear a man whose heart is impassioned by God and he didn't say, "homeless shelter...uhhh no thank you god that sounds way too difficult". No this man said "yes, Lord"...and now he can see how God has specially crafted him for just this time and is amazed by it all.

That is what Paul was doing here. In Acts 19:21 we read his mission, his passion "I must go to Jerusalem. I must go to Rome" Far more than the must of a tourist. This was the must of a man convinced that God had something He wanted him to do even if it was difficult, even if his life was in danger and threatened. Paul knows that he is probably saying his last goodbye to many of them and has a sense of urgency to get all those things said that they really need to know. Time is short here in Troas.

Look at v.7 Notice what day of the week it is. It's the first day of the week. That is Sunday when they meet together. The Jews observed the Sabbath on the 7th day, Saturday. But here we see the Christians met on the first day of the week, Sunday. We must assume they met on this day

referred to in scripture as “the Lord’s Day” to celebrate the day of Jesus resurrection. Here in the third story upper room, the believers gather to listen to Paul’s preaching and to also say goodbye. As one reads through this passage you get a sense of urgency and importance. Time is short so the sermon is long. Even after Eutychus falls out the window and is resurrected. Paul goes back up and continues to teach until breakfast. Paul’s purpose is clear. His passion is evident. He knows what it is that God has called him to do...and he wants to get it done because time is running out. Do I have that sense of passion? Do I have a heart for the lost? Have I discovered what it is that God has crafted me for and am I doing it? Am I pursuing it? Ephesians 2:10 ‘We are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus to do good works so that we should walk in them.’ Some of you may not know exactly what it is you have been crafted for. There is a spiritual gift inventory that I’ve designed just for that purpose. Its out on the table in the lobby. Fill it out and turn it in to the office so that you can meet with a gift counselor to talk about how God has crafted you and what it is that He may want you to do about it. If you know what God wants you to do and are doing it. Then great. Infect others with a passion by delighting to do what Hes asked. That is very encouraging and life-giving. Spread the contagion. Its exciting to be used by God.

I’m encouraged when others help me see God’s hand in a situation. I’m encouraged when people come alongside and share with me what they have learned from God. I’m encouraged when I get infected by someone impassioned by god’s mission for them. And there is another thing that has been incredibly encouraging, exhorting in my life. That is the Word of God. See in v.7 The believers gathered together and Paul taught them from the word. It was a long sermon. It went to midnight. But people didn’t get up and leave...they were hungry for God’s word. They were talking about it all night and sharing with each other. Take your spiritual pulse. Do you have a hunger and thirst for God’s word?

Hunger is a sign of life. If you don't get hungry, then you are sick or dead. Paul was compelled to pass on the truth of God's word. II Timothy 3:14 in some of the last words he wrote from a Roman prison. "You however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of knowing from whom you have learned them. The sacred writings which are able to give the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching...." Hunger is a sign of life. Do you have a hunger for God's word? If not you need to develop some spiritual taste buds for it, for I have found there is nothing more encouraging. Nothing that can strengthen me, nothing that can kick me in the... when I need it, like the powerful word of God.

Don't miss this additional encouragement. Did you see in the text the encouragement of believers simply spending time together? V.7 "they gathered together". This was the believers. They had probably worked hard all day and then they came together in the evening, first day of the week Sunday to tool up and be spiritually filled up and encouraged for the rest of the work week. I don't see them complaining about getting together. I don't see them rushing home early. I don't see many looking at their watches when the preacher goes long. I don't hear a lot of complaints about being tired because they worked all day. No. They longed simply spend time together with believers of like faith. They had been beat up all week by the world and now they come together here to worship and encourage each other, eat together and remember the Lord's sacrifice together. Hebrew 10:24 "let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another and all the more as you see the day drawing near." Sense the urgency? Do you sense the encouragement of simply showing up. Christians need relationships to grow. We don't grow in isolation from others. God intended us to grow as a family. The very best way you can encourage your brothers and

sister in Christ...simply show up. Vote with your feet. Say I'm committed to this group enough so I'm going to do everything I can to make this a priority. I'm going to make showing up on Sunday morning just as much a priority as showing up at work on Monday morning. I'm going to show up so that I can encourage and be encouraging to others. For if you are not here you can't be encouraged and if you are not here you have no chance of encouraging other people.

The last thing I see here that encourages me is to see the power of God at work. There are few things that encourage me more than to see God move in power. A young boy, from the Greek word for youth, he may have been anywhere from age 8 to 14 was tired. Paul had been preaching long and late at night. V.8 Doctor Luke mentions that there were many oil lamps burning robbing the oxygen from the room. Stuffy crowded room. I can picture Eutychus getting drowsy and heading over to sit in the widow sill to try and catch from fresh air and stay awake. But it doesn't work. With the hypnotic flames dancing on the walls sometime after mid-night, his head drops down and he rolls out the window, taking falling asleep literally, three stories down.

Now some expositors might say the main point of this passage is there will be serious consequences to falling asleep in church. (I kind of like that one but...) Other take this passage symbolically and say it's a challenge to those sitting on the fence between darkness and light. If you fall asleep spiritually then you will fall out of the light and life of God and into the darkness of death. That truth is certainly in Bible land and would really preach. But is that the main point of Luke the author? I believe Luke included this story of Eutychus to highlight the power of God. Eutychus fell asleep to his death. And though there is debate about whether he actually died or whether they just thought he died. I think if Luke the doctor said he was dead in v.9 "Paul picked him up dead". Then he was dead and Paul saw the mighty power of God work through him as he stretched out on the young boy. In a very similar fashion that Elijah

the prophet did to the young boy who had died. God raised this boy to new life. The group goes right back upstairs in v.11 and celebrates communion, remembering the person and work of Jesus death and resurrection. What a powerful context to observe communion after the death and resurrection of this young boy. What incredible reason to be encouraged.

I am encouraged to know that same resurrection power is inside me. I don't always feel it, but I know its there and I ought to expect God to move at anytime. This community of believers walked away greatly encouraged because they had seen the power of God, life and hope discovered in the face of death. They are encouraged to put their trust in a God who can raise the dead.

So do I expect God can and will do great things this week? Do I anticipate that God will lead people out of the darkness and into the marvelous light of truth? God has the power to transform the darkest heart. God's power is so very evident right here in Troas. Paul longs to see that power Phil 3:10 "That I may know him and power of his resurrection." Do you see the power of God in your life? Perhaps you need someone to come alongside and help you see God's perspective. When we look in the mirror of our own life its hard to see the changes, its difficult for us to detect at times the power of transformation that God has worked into us. But those around can see it. Ask your best friend this question. " Have you seen the power of God transforming my life? In what way?" Then listen and be encouraged for if you are a living breathing believer you will be transformed by the power of God. If its not there then perhaps you need to check your pulse. Is there a growing hunger? Is there a desire to know God? Is there a desire understand and live out the truth. Hunger is a sign of life.

Captain Husband of the Space Shuttle, Discovery? knew that when he kissed his wife and kids goodbye it could be his last goodbye. And so he had left behind a stack of videos he had made, one for each of his

children. They were videos of himself leading them through a devotions and prayer. One video devotion for day each he would be gone. That's a guy passing on truth, infecting, living life as if it really could end tomorrow. What do you want to pass on? He was ready to say goodbye and did it with no regrets. Are you ready? What are you going to do about it?

Acts 20

The consequences for falling asleep in church

LIFECHANGE; historical movings of Paul and letters to Corinth written some lost. Luke joins the group presumably at Phillippi (the "we") Accompanied by representatives from the various churches that had given money for the church at Jerusalem that was hurting financially. No delegate from Phillipi was mentioned but Luke appears to be that person.

Swindoll" p45 Paul left Ephesus and headed to Macedonia retracing his steps in visiting the churches of Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea that he preached to during his 2nd missionary journey. He drops down to Greece and spent 3 months there and wrote his theological masterpiece a letter to the church at Rome. We read in that letter that Paul has been

collecting donations from all the churches he has been visiting for the needy believers in Jerusalem whom he hopes to visit before Passover. However his plans for an ocean crossing hit some problems 20:3 as a plot formed by the Jews to assassinate him on board ship and toss his body over at sea came to light, so Paul wisely took a different route.

Did Paul show a lack of faith and trust in God by changing his travel route? No. Paul would have been foolish to board that boat knowing full well assassins lay in wait on board. God informed him of the plot so that he could change his plans and escape. God wasn't trying to test his courage here. Paul trusted God but he also knew when to retreat from danger.

v.4 Traveling seminary class that was always in session. Discussed scripture as they walked along. Paul's life always on display making the teaching real. There were no class distinctions or hierarchy in the group. Aristarcus means what it seems to mean in English. Aristocrat, the first part of it is a word meaning best the second part means rule. People who would have this name would come from the upper levels of society. We don't really know for sure if Aristarcus was from the aristocracy or if scoundus was a slave, but it would seem so. The man whose name was secondus which means "the second" was most certainly a slave. Slave didn't bother to name their children, they would just number them. The first, Primus second, third so on. It may be the number three or Tertius who wrote the letter to the Romans as Paul secretary was this second mans brother? Because Secondus was a slave matter not at all to Paul. Timothy was a half Jew and half Gentile and was freely accepted by Paul. He treated them all as brothers in Christ. Gal 3:28 "There is neither Jew nor Greek..." These men were from many different places, but engaged in team ministry with Paul as their leader.

It is possible that this Acts 20 took place in the home of Carpus in Troas. Bible sleuths deduce that when Paul wrote a final letter from Rome to Pastor Timothy he asked that he stop in Troas and pick up the old robe he had forgotten at the home of Carpus, so Acts 20 probably took place in the spacious 3 story home of Carpus, on a Sunday the Lords Day the day of the Resurrection. The congregants had worked a full day but came together in the evening for a common meal and remembering the death of Jesus. It was a larger gathering then usual as Paul was there and was going to say goodbye and leave in the morning. The room was packed. Paul was a great communicator and knew how to keep the sheep fed and understood. He also knew that the mind can absorb no more then the seat can endure. But Paul had so much to share and this was his final shot. This was it. He couldn't bring himself to stop and no one was complaining so on and on he went.

Feast of unleavened bread. Eight day festival that begins with the Passover

Luke gives us a rare glimpse of first century church lifeyears after Passover. 20:7

- 1) Notice on what day of the week the early church met to worship. The Jews observed the Sabbath on the 7th day, Saturday. But the Christians met on the first day of the week, Sunday in honor we assume of the day of Jesus resurrection.
- 2) "we gathered together" implies that church service was a time primarily for believers as they would be spiritually tooled up for the week ahead when they would be witnessing for Christ.
- 3) The Lords supper was an integral part of their worship. No details given here on how they celebrated communion, which is a good thing and we are allowed to remember Christ's death in a variety of ways today. We don't have to be in a church building, we don't necessarily need to have to have a minister officiating communion. As long as there is a body of believers, a spirit of worship communion can take place anywhere and anytime. Perhaps it could become a powerful part of something your family does together.
- 4) The presence of biblical teaching. Adequate feeding certainly takes time. Paul probably got carried away here and Eutychus would probably agree as he falls asleep and tips over falling out of the third story window.

Break bread. Included the lord's supper and Agape or love feast that Christians commonly held with the Lords supper.

Euthacus (name means "fortunate" and so he was) story served to emphasize Paul's knowing that his time with them is short. He wants to get in all the time to share with them as he possibly can even a guy who falls out of window and dies. He goes right back up and continues to talk with them. I would have canceled it...folks its getting late people are tired. Lets all go home and go to bed. Especially after what happened. But Paul doesn't. He seems to understand this is his last shot. Last words of encouragement, challenge, telling them things they really need to know.

Its encouraging to have this story of Eutachus in the Bible indicating that sometimes people fell asleep even when the apostle Paul was preaching. I'm sure Paul was not boring or irrelevant. I'm sure he taught well and taught deeply. But sometimes in spite of the even the best teaching the human flesh is weak.

Was Eutachus dead? Different opinions. V.9 says 'picked up dead" But when Paul got to him he said don't be alarmed he's alive" Some

concluded that people thought he was dead, but when Paul got to him he discovered he was actually alive. Other believe that euthychus died and the when Paul go to to him he performed a resurrection. Luke was present. Luke was a physician. If luke says Euthychus was dead, then I am ready to believe that he w2as dead and their was a miracle take place.

The significance of the event is this. Paul was not gong to see these believers again. This is farewell scene. They were observing the Lords supper . Euthacus could be a picture of our future death and then future reunion with Christ after a physical death. Death will come but that is not the end, because there is a resurrection and we will meet again.

Even Paul later in the chapter foresees his death and beatings and arrests but that is not the end of the story. The ending is never bad for Christians. God who has begun a good work in us will keep on perfecting that work until the day of Christ.

They are in Troas the place where Paul earlier he received a vision from God to go to Macedonia. Troas was a place of vision clarity for Paul Acts 16.

God can raise up the dead. There is no reason to fear what will happen to Paul or even to the others in town. Paul goes right back upstairs and they continue to talk until breakfast. We put our trust in the God who can raise the dead. Time is short. The purpose is growing clear. I'm on a mission from God and it wont' be easy.

The urgency of Paul's mission and purpose is clear. He is not heartless or uncaring for those who are falling asleep around him, but he will continue his mission whether people are awake and on board and excited or whether they are exhausted, board, even damaged, crisis. Deal with it in the most loving way and move on.

One persons crisis should not shut down the mission purpose, shouldn't cause us to second guess what God has called me to do.

Why does someone fall asleep in a sermon?

1)They are tired. Worked all day/night. Haven't slept all night.

Exhausted. Its late. Past the time I'm normally sleeping and my body clock says, its time to sleep. Mediterranean heat. Many lamps consumed oxygen and crowded conditions.

The Greek word here for sleep is the English word for hypnosis Hupno. The flickering flames on the wall did their work. Eyes shut, body relaxed and out he went, headlong to the pavement below. The congregation gasped several probably screamed but the mourning did not last long. As

Elijah and Elisha prophets of old did, Paul laid himself across the boys body and the young man was revived. What a miracle. People were not sleepy anymore after that rush of adrenalin and so back up they went. They celebrated communion and Paul preached again until the sun came up.

Darkness wasn't the problem. Was it hot and stuffy in the upper room? Decided to sit in the window sill to catch a fresh breeze to keep him awake? Stiffness, oil lamp smell, late hour and incessant talking was too much. Probably a boy between 8 and 14 years.

Examples here of praying, sharing meals, caring for needs and seeking to be together.

2) They are bored. The subject is not very exciting or interesting to them
3) Boring preacher. Poorly organized, rambling material, monotone delivery, too much time spent on needless detail. Out of touch with people needs and how they relate to the Word. It can be tough to stay awake with preaching like that.

Paul embraces the young man and life returns to his body. Spiritually speaking, the gospel has that same power to invigorate souls that are dead in sin. Through faith we can come to life and enjoy the sustaining power of Christ in us.

Even the best of saints fall asleep in church. I have dozed off at times. My professor in seminary said it may be some of the best and most needed rest you will get all week. For those of us who keep such busy schedules this is the first time all week that you can sit back and relax. Our spirit may be willing but the body is sleepy.

My concern is not that people fall asleep in church, that can happen for a number of reasons, good and bad, but what is more concerning is the thousands of people who come on Sunday morning with their bodies wide awake, but their souls are asleep. Some of you are more awake at a garage sale or watching TV then when you are sitting here with you eyes wide open in church appearing perfectly awake but are spiritual asleep.

Why are some people asleep in church? Because they have never been awake. You may be sitting on the inside but are still on the outside, you may hear the Word preached, sing the songs, but its all about religion and there is no relationship with God. As Screwtape the senior Devil in C Lewis novel Screwtape letters said, "The safest road to hell is the gradual one, the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without signposts." Is it time for you to wake up?

Sin might be another reason, you are in a backslidden compromising state and you know it..you are in a spiritual slumber. Samson is a prime

example of a guy that started out and ended in faith but messed up big time in between. His final doze in Delilahs lap was symbolic of his spiritual state. He awoke from his sleep and thought "I'll go out as before and shake myself free. But he did not know that the Lord had left him." Sin will desensitize us and we soon fall asleep...even in church. Everything looks fine on the outside, but sin makes us bored with spiritual things.

Familiarity is another reason for spiritual slumberers. Lewis recognized this danger when he warned a friend who was considering entering into the ministry that constant familiarity with spiritual matter could dull him to their significance. "None are so unholy as the man whose hands are cauterized with holy things."

How to stay awake in church:

If we have never been awake before, then we must ask God for the grace to believe, confess our sin and receive him as savior, ask Christ to do a work and make us brand new. Make a u-turn in life. The joy of worship will fill our souls.

If its familiarity then we must deliberately and with intentionality participate in corporate worship. When we sing a song, sing it to God and intentionally block all the rest out. Sing with the mind and engage with the heart. Listening to the Word read and preached we must be hearing for the voice of God.

R Kent Hughes P274 "Satan desire a long sleep Illustr.

v.7 The first day of the week.

Why is Paul defending himself and what he did. Is there an accusation implied? Was it a follow my example of servanthood. Look what is coming for them.

My life is less important then doing what God has called me to do, my God given mission.

Do I know my mission? Am I ready to make that more important then my very life itself. Do I live my life driven by mission? Write it out? What am I supposed to be doing. Ask Jesus. What is it? When I find that out am I willing to give up whatever to do it? Even if others want to protect me. Parents who may not wants there kids to spend their life in Tibet. Could be tough, might not get the hospital care, Might get hurt...even killed.

Phil 1 For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain. Is that the kind of dedication and sacrifice that I respond to the things that I know that God has revealed.

Spending time alone may clarify God's mission truth for me. V.13 Paul purposely chose to walk alone rather than join the rest of the gang for a faster ship trip. Surprising. He walked across the nose of land just south of Troas to 20 miles south to Assos. The others sailed 40 miles around the peninsula Sea sick? Possibly. Just feel like spending some time walking and thinking and praying alone. A lot easier to do on the road than on a boat load full of people. Why? He knew his time with them was short. He wanted to get to Jerusalem as fast as possible v.16 yet alone time. (READ into this) time with God. Prayer. Doesn't say that but the surprising things cause us to read into the text. Not a main point but an observation.

Even in the urgency of mission time alone, down time away from people, where all that is left is you and God, is something worth considering as valuable to do.

Of the 50 days of Pentecost, 16 of them had already past. Had Paul stopped in Ephesus he would have had to visit many families and change ships and might even be trouble locally for him. It was all more time than Paul could afford right then. Paul wanted to be in Jerusalem to give the gift of money and celebrate Passover in Jerusalem.

How do I discover God's specific will for my life right now.

- 1)pray talking to God. A specific question. God will you reveal to me what I am supposed to be doing at this time of life.
- 2) Talking to my husband/friends who know me well.
- 3) Look to where your passions are. Verse? "Give you the desires of me heart?"
- 4) How has God shaped and crafted me. How has God crafted me and what does he want me to do about it?

Called specifically to equip believers. Am I doing it? Where?
For this time it's the passion of my kids. A passion for worship.

v.19 It is still appropriate to serve the Lord in humility.
Everyone wants to be called a servant leader, but nobody wants to be treated like a servant.

We are to be bold in our teaching repentance and faith in Jesus.

v.22 Obedience in the face of the unknown.
The spirit the one who directs.

Paul wants to finish strong.

v.27 The will of God

I Thess 5:18 Giving thanks always

This is will of God keeping oneself unstained by the world.

The specific will of God pours out from the general will of God.

Application for Elders: Be on guard from distortion of truth from the inside and the outside. Must know the truth. Must also teach the truth. Example the truth and lovingly confront the truth. Sometimes they just flash out in a Bible study but still they must be confronted in love.

The elders need to teach the whole general will of God. Do I know it and do it? From their the specific will of God.

P. Jackson Acts 20:1-12

The pulse of a healthy follower of Jesus.

I am thankful for that story because if they will fall asleep on Apostle Paul I don't feel so bad.

They go back upstairs and celebrate communion. They celebrate the fact that they are alive in Christ. I want you to take your pulse this morning to see if it beats for Jesus.

First sign of a pulse.

1) They had a genuine hunger for the word of God. Certainly they were there to say goodbye to Paul but they came to hear God's word. Then even after Euthacus was raised from the dead they talked with each other in a questions answer format with the Apostle. Hunger and thirst are signs of life. A hunger and thirst for what God says is a sign of life. In 10 years my kids will leave my home and say goodbye. They will choose whom they love and I hope my voice means a lot to them, but more importantly I hope that they cherish the words of God. II Tim 3:4-17 "continue in the things you have learned and that from childhood you have learned the sacred writings. All scripture is inspired by God and is profitable...for"

Check your pulse. Is there a desire to know God? A growing hunger? A desire to understand and live out the truth.

2) The experienced the power of God. Some commentators say Eutyclus didn't die but protected him, most say the medical doctor Luke says he was dead and he was. Either way, Gods power was evident. Phil 3:10 "That I may know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings. That I may be made more like Jesus Christ. If you are more like Jesus then you were then you have known the power of God in your life.

3) Celebrated the person and work of Christ. In the middle of the night when the bed looks inviting. Euthacus is alive and they celebrate that Jesus is alive. Matt 26:29 Jesus says to followers in an upper room. "Take eat this is my body. Drink. This is my blood in the covenant for the forgiveness of sins. I will not do this again until I drink it again in my fathers house. II Corinthians 5:21 "He made him who knew no sin, to be... It's a sign of life to remember and express thanks to Jesus.