

3 Lessons From Paul's Plans & Travels

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Date: 23 October 2016

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[0:00] Please take your Bibles and turn to the book of Acts chapter 20. Acts chapter 20. We're going to be reading the first 17 verses.

! Acts chapter 20 and verse 1. When the uproar had ended, Paul sent for the disciples and after encouraging them, said goodbye and set out for Macedonia.

He traveled through that area speaking many words of encouragement to the people and finally arrived in Greece where he stayed three months. Because the Jews made a plot against him just as he was about to sail for Syria, he decided to go back through Macedonia.

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.

These men went on ahead and waited for us at Troas. But we sailed from Philippi after the Feast of Unleavened Bread and five days later joined the others at Troas where we stayed seven days.

[1:12] 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.

There were many lamps in the upstairs room where we were meeting. 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. Paul went down, threw himself on the young man and put his arms around him.

Don't be alarmed, he said. He's alive. Then he went upstairs again and broke bread and ate. After talking until daylight, he left. The people took the young man home alive and were greatly comforted.

We went on ahead to the ship and sailed for Asas where we were going to take Paul aboard. He had made this arrangement because he was going there on foot. When he met us at Asas, we took him aboard and went on to Middelene.

[2:16] The next day, we set sail from there and arrived at Chios. The day after that, we crossed over to Samos and on the following day arrived at Miletus.

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.

From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church. Something very unusual happened when Paul came to Ephesus with the gospel.

It was a revival. Nothing short of a great awakening. A mighty work of God as the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honor and the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.

Large numbers were converted. Many churches planted in that whole region. And Paul's three years in Ephesus was the longest and most successful of any of his visits anywhere.

[3:28] But it wasn't without opposition, as we saw. He writes from Ephesus to Corinth and tells them that though a great door for effective work is opened to me here in Ephesus, yet he says there are many who oppose me.

And last week in chapter 19 of Acts, we saw three of those great enemies that the evil ones stirred up against Paul and his gospel.

There was the unbelieving Jews. There was the demonic sorcerers. And there was the rioting idolaters. Paul also writes in 1 Corinthians 15 about fighting wild beasts in Ephesus.

Not at all speaking about animals, but sadly speaking about men who had such a savage thirst for Paul's blood that he calls them wild beasts that he had to fight at Ephesus.

And shortly after leaving Ephesus, he again writes a second letter to those in Corinth to tell them about the hardships he's just faced. And he says, we were under great pressure, far beyond our

ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life.

[4:43] Indeed, in our hearts, we felt the sentence of death, as if a death sentence had been passed upon them. But he says, this happened that we might not rely on ourselves, but on God who raises the dead.

He has delivered us from such a deadly peril and will deliver us. You see, the Lord was fighting for Paul and his team at Ephesus.

And so he delivered them from their enemies, and he did something to make his name great in Ephesus. We're going to come back to Ephesus, and we're going to see its significant place in God's plan for the gospel among the Gentiles.

So during these three years at Ephesus, a strong local church was organized with its own elders, and the highlight of chapter 20 is Paul's farewell address to these elders at Ephesus.

That's the highlight. That's really the meat of chapter 20. In this address to the Ephesian elders, we have a valuable summary of Paul's ministry among them.

[5:53] We find out more about what did Paul do for those three years. And he sets forth his own life as a model and an example to the elders at Ephesus. And in this address, he'll give an important word of instruction and words of warning to these elders.

And as such, it's one of the key passages in the New Testament for understanding the role of elders in the local church. So we're in for a treat here in Acts chapter 20.

But we'll not get to the address itself today as there's just too much that goes on before we get to that final address. Indeed, nearly half of the chapter is taken up with travels and ministry leading up to this farewell address.

And since these are words of Scripture that are God-breathed and therefore profitable, it's my aim this morning to draw three lessons from Paul's plans, his travels.

And Lord willing, next time we'll come to that farewell address. Now turn back to chapter 19 and verse 21. Paul is still in Ephesus.

[7:08] He's experiencing great successes for the gospel. And here we have his plans for the rest of this third missionary journey. Verse 21 is like a page torn out of his travel itinerary.

Notice it. Where's Paul going from here? After all this happened, Paul decided to go to Jerusalem, passing through Macedonia and Achaia.

After I have been there, he said, I must visit Rome also. Can we have the map? His plan. Here he is on his third missionary journey.

He's come from his home church in Antioch, Syria. He went through Galatia, Lystra area. Now he's at Ephesus. He's here for three years. And now his plan.

What's his plan? Well, from Ephesus, he plans to go on to Macedonia. That's over here, Philippi, Berea, and Thessalonica. After Macedonia, he plans to go where?

[8:12] What's the text say? Achaia. That's this whole region here of which Corinth is the chief city. So plan one on the itinerary, Macedonia.

Then to Achaia, visiting all these churches that he has planted and done evangelism in. And then on to where?

Jerusalem. Back down to Jerusalem. In fact, that's how he finished his last missionary journey, his second missionary journey.

He left Corinth, from Corinth, and headed back down to Jerusalem. And then after Jerusalem, Rome.

Rome is right over here. Way over to the west of Corinth. So you see the four-part plan of Paul.

[9:13] Rome, the capital city of the empire. Well, that's his intention. That's what Paul decided to do. He thought about things, and he said, this is what I've decided is my plan.

Now, he sent his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, ahead to Macedonia. Again, that's this whole region here. He sends his co-workers ahead, and he stays in the province of Asia a little longer.

And while he's there, the riot in Ephesus that we saw last week, great as Artemis of the Ephesians.

And now let's see what actually happens. Whether Paul's plans were ever realized.

We're in chapter 20 now, in verse 1. When the uproar had ended. Remember that two-hour uproar of chanting about their idol and their goddess.

When the uproar had ended, Paul sent for the disciples, and after encouraging them, said goodbye, and set out for Macedonia. Just as planned.

[10:19] So Paul's three years in Ephesus ends with him encouraging the disciples. Now, that's the only farewell address he intended to make. And then he was off to Macedonia.

Well, verse 2 says he traveled through that area, speaking many words of encouragement to the people. So there at Philippi was Lydia and her family, and the Philippian jailer and his family, and the others that were saved, over to Berea and Thessalonica.

And what's he doing in these churches? Well, he's encouraging them. He's speaking words of encouragement.

Notice again the nature of his message. Many words of encouragement. And then verse 2 ends, And finally arrived in Greece, where he stayed for three months.

Now, Greece is just another name for Achaia, this whole region of which Corinth was the principal city. So, we see that all is going as planned.

[11:33] Macedonia first, to the south, Achaia. Now, before I go on, I want to draw out a lesson for us, and it's this, that every Christian needs large doses of encouragement.

Now, we saw this a couple weeks ago, but we keep bumping into it as we're making our way through the book of Acts. The Holy Spirit is telling us something important.

Repetition is one way of emphasis in the scriptures. The book of Acts uses some form of this word, encouragement, over a dozen times, more than any other book in the Bible.

Paul leaves Ephesus with encouragement. He gathers the disciples, one last word to them, encourages them. He speaks many words of encouragement as he visits the churches in Macedonia and Achaia.

Now, Paul's not wasting his breath. He knows that every Christian needs massive doses of encouragement. That's what he did on his second missionary journey. Remember, he encouraged and strengthened them.

[12:38] There is everything to discourage the Christian from a life of faith and obedience and Christian service to God and men. The story is told, and it's a fictitious story, but I think it makes an important point.

The story is told of how the devil once put his tools up for sale. His shells were lined with a treacherous collection of instruments. There was bitterness and hatred and envy and jealousy and lust and hypocrisy and pride and selfishness and more.

And then laid apart from all the rest was a harmless-looking device, which, although well-worn, was priced very highly. What's the name of that tool, someone asked.

That is discouragement, was the reply. And why do you price it so high? Because it is more useful to me than any of the others, said Satan.

For with it I can pry a man's heart open when I cannot get near him with any other tool. And it's badly worn because I have used it on almost everyone since few people seem to realize that it belongs to me.

[13:56] Discouragement. Now, the Apostle Paul understands that. He knows that one of Satan's key strategies for believers is to discourage them.

And so he's convinced that everywhere he goes, he wants to leave behind Christians who are encouraged. And so he speaks many words of encouragement to them.

I want you to consider four reasons why discouragement is so dangerous. In the handout, it says three, but I'm throwing in a free bonus this morning. Four reasons why discouragement is so dangerous.

First of all, a discouraged Christian is a vulnerable Christian. We saw it Wednesday night in Asaph in Psalm 73.

He was a discouraged man. He was plagued with problems. Every morning he woke up to problems. And they clung to him like his shadow all through the day.

[14:59] Health problems, financial problems. And all the while he's working hard to fear God and keep his commandments. To stay pure in heart and hands.

Living a holy life. But for all of his effort, what does he get? More problems. He's discouraged. And he begins to doubt the goodness of God to his people.

What's the use then of keeping myself pure? He's discouraged. But when he looked across the street at his neighbor, he even got more discouraged. Because there is his wicked neighbor.

He's just divorced his second wife and traded her in for a third and younger one. He never goes to church. He's either sleeping in on Sunday morning when poor Asaph leaves.

Or else he's out playing with some of his toys on Sunday. He jogs by every day in the morning with his fit and trim body. He's healthy. He's never sick. And oh, he's so successful in business.

[16:01] Constantly adding on to his house. And his driveway is full of the newest cars. And he's just got life by the tail. And poor Asaph is just a step away from quitting the life of holiness.

Throwing in the towel. What's the use? I would rather trade places with that guy. The wicked, prospering neighbor. He was a step away, he tells us.

And his foot was already slipping. That's how close he was. You see, a discouraged Christian is a vulnerable Christian. He's in danger of falling.

In danger, yes, of even apostasy. And then secondly, a discouraged Christian is a poor advertisement for the gospel of Jesus Christ.

He's just a poor advertisement for Jesus all the way around. Think of the opposite. There goes a Christian rejoicing in the Lord. She can hardly believe it.

[17:05] She's pinching herself. All my sins. They're paid for and forgiven. Not in part, but all of them. Never to be brought up against me because of Jesus' blood.

God. He's got a Christian. Completely freed from the dominion of the devil and his power over her. Free from sin's bondage. Free to serve the Lord.

And the Holy Spirit lives in her, producing his love and joy and peace. Well, she's got many problems. Those problems that are common to man.

Even some extra ones that come from being a follower of Jesus in a Jesus-hating world. But she's got the Lord Jesus with her and for her.

And so she's living with him the good life. The good life. The pleasant life. And so she's rejoicing in the Lord.

[18:02] He daily bears her burdens. He invites her to cast all her cares on him. And that's what she does every day. With the worry, she just passes it on to the Lord and goes on rejoicing and trusting in him.

So that even in her sorrow, she's always rejoicing. What an appealing advertisement for Jesus and his gospel. A joy in trials that makes the gospel attractive.

No wonder the devil is out to discourage Christians, you see. No wonder he makes good use of this tool on us. Because discouragement is a great joy robber, isn't it?

It just makes off with our joy ever so quickly. And now he has the Christian walking around downcast and depressed and gloomy and sad and cheerless.

And the devil loves to point these kind of Christians out to the non-believers. You see, that's what you get when you follow Jesus. You just kiss goodbye all of your joy and happiness.

[19:09] He's not good. He's the killjoy. Follow me. I'll do you good. A discouraged Christian, you see, is a poor advertisement for Jesus and his gospel.

But thirdly, a discouraged Christian is often an inactive Christian. Even Christians that used to be busy serving the Lord in the church, in the community. And then they've quit.

Now, how did they quit? Well, they first got discouraged, you see. They first got to the place where they wondered, is it really worth it? I can't see any results.

And nobody seems to pay attention. And if Satan wants to shut down the believer's service to Christ, he sows discouragement. Because that's the first step to quitting, isn't it?

And that's why Paul writes to the believers in Galatia, let us not grow weary in doing good. Paul knows that in all Christian service, there is a tendency to grow weary in it.

[20:12] Because we're living in a fallen world. And the people you serve are fallen. And you yourself are fallen. And there's just enough to discourage you. So you're doing good, but people around you aren't.

You're working hard at work, is unto the Lord, but people are sloughing off around you. What's the tendency? To get discouraged. And to quit. And so Paul writes to them, let us not grow weary in doing good.

He's got a word of encouragement to keep us not from being discouraged. It's because we will reap. In proper time, we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those belonging to the family of believers. But you see, unresolved weariness is the first step.

In stopping those good deeds. Don't treat discouragement as a little thing. It's a slowdown that's intending to come to a standstill.

[21:14] That's the devil's use of this tool of encouragement. And fourthly, a discouraged Christian is contagious. Have you noticed that?

They easily pull others down in the dumps with them. Remember when Israel came up to the border of the promised land and Moses sends in 12 spies to scout out the land?

Ten spies came back with a discouraging report. We just can't. We can't. We can't take the land.

Giants in the land make us. We were like grasshoppers in their sight.

Their cities are walled up to the heavens. How are we ever going to get in? We can't. We can't.

Whoa, whoa, whoa. You know how the whole camp of Israel spent the night?

That night? Weeping. Wailing in their tents. Whoa. Whoa. Whoa is us. Grumbling, complaining.

They would not go in.

[22:20] Discouragement is as contagious as the common cold. So if you're discouraged in life and the joy is gone, take it seriously, brothers and sisters. Don't just, oh, it's nothing.

No, it's not nothing. It's Satan's well-worn tool. It's a dangerous state to remain in. So we find Paul beating the bushes to encourage Christians.

I wonder if you are putting yourself in the place where you are regularly receiving encouragement. It's a must in the Christian life.

It's no small part of the ministry of the local church. We are to encourage one another daily, aren't we? It's what's behind the proclamation of the word of God, the preaching and teaching of the word of God.

And this is why wherever Paul found followers of Jesus, it wasn't long before he was speaking many words of encouragement. His letters to the churches give us an insight into that.

[23:23] So would you know, what kind of words did he use to encourage? Well, read the epistles of Paul. These are the churches, Thessalonica, Philippi, Corinth. Just go and read those epistles and you see how full they are.

So his letter to the Philippians just oozes with reasons to what? To rejoice in the Lord always. That's encouragement that he gives them. His letter to Corinth, Rome, Titus, Timothy.

See how he encourages the brother. You pour over those words. They're true of you as well if you're a believer. And receive and suck in the encouragement. Here's just a sample from his second letter to the Thessalonian church.

May our Lord Jesus himself and God our Father who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope. Encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.

Getting weary with your good deeds and your good words and need strength. The Lord Jesus and his Father who loved you and by his grace given you everlasting encouragement.

[24:34] He points to the love and grace found in Jesus Christ. There's encouragement in that. Eternal encouragement in who the Lord is.

In what he's done. What he's promised to do. And then the Bible itself. You know in one sense it's just 66 books of encouragement.

There's encouragements here. Yes, even lamentations. The weeping prophet. Boy, does he have some sweet nuggets of encouragement in the midst of his tears about the great faithfulness of God. His new mercies every morning. You see, everything that was written in the past was written to teach us. So that through the endurance and encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. So where do you go for encouragement? You've got a whole Bible of encouragements to draw in. To fight against this work of the devil to discourage us.

[25:43] Are you not only receiving that? Are you receiving it in the public means of grace but also privately reading through and meditating, memorizing, praying in and working out the encouragement.

The everlasting encouragement that is found in scripture. A Christian daily living upon the word of God is an encouraged Christian.

And he's in a safer condition than the discouraged one because he's rejoicing in the Lord. And it's harder to get him to sin when Jesus is so precious to him that it fills his heart with joy.

He's a good advertisement for the gospel. And his encouragement is contagious. So getting close enough to others to receive encouragement.

Close enough to give encouragement. We need to not only be on the receiving end but the giving end as well. As we're called to encourage one another. Christians need large doses of

encouragement.

[26:51] And some who are here need extra heavy doses of encouragement. And church is the place of mutual encouragement. So Paul's right on schedule.

He left Ephesus. He went to Macedonia. And down to Achaia. What was next on his agenda? Jerusalem. Back home. Going back to Syria. Stopping at Jerusalem first. So he's ready to sail from Achaia. Back home to Syria. Antioch.

Stopping first at Jerusalem. Just as he did at the end of his second missionary journey. But here in Achaia. Paul learned the lesson that we too need to learn. And that's our second lesson.

That sometimes the Lord has a better plan to replace ours. A better plan to replace ours. Proverbs 16.9 says, In his heart a man plans his course.

[27:53] But the Lord determines his steps. So Paul had planned his course. His plan is to go right from Corinth back to Jerusalem.

But here in Corinth, a wrench was thrown into the works. Or here in Achaia, Greece. A wrench was thrown into the works. And Paul's plans were scrapped.

Now notice the wrench that God used to turn Paul's steps in a totally different direction than the one he had planned. Verse 3 tells us it's once again persecution arising from the Jewish unbelievers.

For just as he was, verse 3, just as he was ready to set sail as planned for Jerusalem, he learns of a Jewish plot to take his life. And that's all it says.

Perhaps they had planted hitmen on that ship. That he had planned to take. So that once they were at sea, Paul would have no way of escaping them.

[28:58] And the sea itself would be a convenient place to cover up their nasty deed. It was a plot on his life. And this will not be the last time that a murderous plot will be uncovered just in time for Paul's escape.

Well, Paul is not yet ready to become fertilizer for seaweed at the bottom of the Mediterranean. And so he concludes that his race is not yet finished.

His task of testifying to the grace of God in the gospel is not yet over. So right at the last minute, he changes plans.

He abandons ship and decides to go in the opposite direction. To go back up through Macedonia.

And you can see that's exactly what he does. He's over here. And look at, he just reverses it.

And will eventually make his way back down. So the change of direction. The scrapping of the plan. The wrench thrown into the itinerary.

[30:01] Now, all that follows in chapter 18 is due to God's rerouting of Paul's journey.

This meeting with the elders at Ephesus wouldn't have happened if he had just moved on. In fact, in one sense, all that happens in the rest of Acts is due to God's changing his direction.

For he might have been killed and dumped into the sea. Paul's original plan was probably to be in Jerusalem by Passover.

But it wasn't to be. His plan was delayed about 50 days. And he now wants to get there by Pentecost. 50 days after Passover. Because, yes, in his heart, a man makes his plans.

But the Lord determines his steps. I wonder, have you found that sometimes the Lord determines your steps down a different path. And a different time than what you had planned.

[31:07] Well, what happens then? What is your response to the Lord's scrapping of the plan and throwing a wrench into your plan? Disappointing your plans.

Are you frustrated and all bent out of shape because you can't do it? Do you try to force your way? Or are you remembering him even when you make your plans?

So that when you're making the plan, you're submitting them to the Lord. If the Lord is willing, I will do this and that. I will go here and there. And if you're making your plan that way, acknowledging him in all your ways.

Lord, I live in your world. My times are in your hands. You're Lord over my life and plans. And you know far better than I what's best for me and most glorifying to you.

I'm acknowledging you as I plan. You see, if I plan that way, then if the Lord interrupts my plan and disappoints my plan, I'm ready to receive it as from the Lord.

[32:10] And to acknowledge, yes, he does know better than I. And so we thank him for disappointments of our plans.

I mean, is there ever any question as to whose plan is best? I mean, let's just ask it here. God's or Paul's plan? Which one was best? Well, we say God's plan. Here, the reason for redirecting Paul's

plan was clear.

It was to save his life, to give him more time to proclaim the gospel. Now, we don't always get to know the reasons why God scraps our plans and why he redirects our steps, why he delays us. And so there's a great need for faith when God scraps our plans. To trust his superior knowledge and wisdom, who sees the end from the beginning.

To trust his unfailing love for us. His commitment to never stop doing me good. We little know if some change in our plans might have been to save our lives, for all that matter.

[33 : 19] It was just another Tuesday morning in Concord, Massachusetts, and a woman was preparing to leave home to catch her 915 flight to Los Angeles. And just before leaving home, she heard the screeching of the tires and went outside to find that her neighbor's dog had been struck by a car.

And so in comforting her neighbor and helping to care for the dog, she missed her flight to the West Coast. American Airlines flight number 11, the first plane the hijackers flew into the north tower of the World Trade Center, killing all 92 on board.

A change in her schedule. A kind providence, wouldn't you say? You say, does God ever do that kind of thing with me? I think that heaven will show that there's a lot of things that God was delivering us from.

Temptations. Situations that were too great for us. Perhaps even dangers. By delays. By changing our schedules. He's watching over his people.

In a world that is full of danger. Let's learn with Phil Keggy as he sings in one of his songs.

[34 : 34] Disappointment is his appointment. Disappointment, his appointment. Change one letter. Then I see. That the thwarting of my purpose is God's better choice for me.

His appointment must be blessing, though it may come in disguise. For the end from the beginning open to his wisdom lies. Disappointment, his appointment.

Is it not good to know that our all sovereign, all wise, almighty heavenly father is the one who is directing my every step? Is that not encouraging?

He leadeth me. He leadeth me. Oh, blessed thought. Oh, what words with heavenly comfort fraud.

Is that not encouraging? Well, we're encouraged to have a God who leads us and cares for us.

Well, you can imagine the delightful surprise of the believers in Berea and Thessalonica and Philippi when they saw Paul again so soon and unexpectedly.

[35 : 39] They thought that was it. And now he turns around and here he is again. And he comes and he goes on encouraging them. Verse four tells us that he was accompanied by seven Gentile Christians.

Their names are given. And these would have been representatives from the various churches in the area. These churches have sent their offerings for the famine struck saints in Jerusalem.

And that's why Paul's wanting to get back to Jerusalem. And that's why he's got this entourage of other men, representatives from the church, to just do things in a way that will be seen to be honest and above board.

Paul's not pocketing this money. No, we're going together as representatives to go to our brethren down in Jerusalem and together to express our love for them in this offering.

Well, these men were sent ahead and waited at Troas while Paul spent more time here encouraging the churches. They go ahead to Troas where Paul then eventually comes.

[36 : 46] After Passover, Paul caught up with them at Troas and he spent seven days there. The day before they had to leave was the first day of the week. By the way, that is the Christian day of worship, our Christian Sabbath.

And we see it honored here in Troas as Paul gathers the believers together on the first day of the week, the day of our Lord's resurrection, to do what? To break bread, to take the Lord's Supper, which has replaced the Old Testament Passover.

And they remember the body and the blood of Christ given for them. Now, it's here at Troas that we see what happens to people who fall asleep while the preacher is preaching.

I don't see anyone sleeping. It seems these believers gathered in the evening. They came together in the evening.

And that the upper room on the third story had no clock in it for the preacher to see and not one up front for the clock watchers because Paul just kept on preaching and preaching right up to midnight.

[37:54] And this sermon at Troas is the longest on record for the Apostle Paul. It's midnight. And he's still not done. He's just interrupted by this little interruption.

We're told there were many lamps burning in this upper room. I think that's not a throwaway phrase. You ever been in a room where there's lots and lots of candles burning?

It's just consuming all the oxygen in the room. And what do we need to remain alert and alive?

Oxygen. And we're competing with all the lamps that are burning.

And what happens when you're depleted of oxygen? Your eyelids get real heavy. And you begin to doze off. That's exactly what happened here.

I posit that that is a possibility of what happened. And Eutychus, a young man, feeling tired.

[38:56] Perhaps he climbed up into the window sill and sat there because he was having a hard time breathing and needed fresh air. Maybe he was there the whole sermon because the place was packed.

We don't know. Maybe it was just to get a better view of Paul. But there he is, perched in the window sill. Not so much oxygen in the room. And Paul's preaching on and on.

He's doing fine for a while. And then he begins to nod off and finally nods off for the last time. He's in a deep sleep.

And while he's sleeping, he becomes overbalanced and falls out the window three stories down and is picked up dead.

Instant death below. That's Dr. Luke's coroner's report. He says he was dead. He was dead. Well, Paul went down, threw himself on the young man, much like Elijah had done 800 years earlier for that dead son of the widow of Zarephath.

[40:05] And supernaturally, God brought the young man back to life. No, they didn't go home. They went back upstairs. Paul's not done. They haven't even had the Lord's Supper yet.

So back upstairs. Service resumed. They had the Lord's Supper together and ate perhaps an additional love feast. And then Paul talked on and on until daylight.

Midnight. Now, that's one long church service. I realize we sometimes get long here. I realize we sometimes get long here, but just put it in context of Acts chapter 20. Midnight was just halfway.

Now, we're not sure which to admire most. Paul's preaching that long or the people's listening that long. I don't believe it's anything strange that Eutychus fell asleep.

This young man fell asleep. I would rather say that the amazing thing was that no more fell asleep.

[41:07] There they are. There they are. There they are. In that upper room. Oxygen depleted. And they're hanging on the words of Paul.

And what's Paul preaching? Well, he's using the scriptures, as he always did. The encouragement of the scriptures.

They're hungry. They're thirsty for the word of God. Now, I wonder if you've not found, as I have, that we do not grow weary when our minds and hearts are engaged in something.

It can be late at night. I think there was a night this week that the Cubs were playing at midnight. And some of us weren't weary, were we?

As we listened in or watched. When we're engaged, we can watch a movie. We can be watching something. And we're wide awake when our hearts and minds are engaged in it.

[42:12] And that tells me something. Why didn't these folks just doze off? Because they were hanging on every word. This was life.

The words of life. This is what I need to make it through another week. This is my Savior. And what he's done for me. And they were thriving.

Their souls were thriving. And that produces enough adrenaline to keep them awake and alert. And this leads to our third and last lesson today.

Nothing should so engage our attention as God speaking to us. And let us realize that in the reading and preaching of God's word, he is speaking to us.

And there's no higher thought possible to man than the thoughts of God. There's no higher use of the mind, as we heard, of loving him with our mind than to listen and to consider the words of our eternal creator.

[43:15] And so as the sun rose, they took the young man home alive and were greatly comforted. Now that word there for comforted is the same Greek word that twice before had been translated encouraged.

Encouraged. So they all went home greatly encouraged. And that for at least three reasons. First of all, the young man who was dead was alive.

Is that not encouraging to the church? Secondly, they just had an eight hour or so church service where the apostle Paul is preached from the scriptures.

That book written to give encouragement and good hope to God's people. They went home greatly encouraged. And thirdly, they celebrated the Lord's Supper.

Where by faith they feasted upon the Lord Jesus who had given his blood and his body for them. The Lord Jesus comes near.

[44 : 17] He's the host of the feast. And he comes in the Lord's Supper to assure his people of the certainty of their salvation. I suffered for you.

You don't have to suffer. I was condemned in your place. There's no condemnation for those who are in Christ. Don't we go home from a Lord's Supper encouraged? Don't we leave this place with our hearts burning within us?

Thank you, Jesus, again for what you've done. That's what it was. And they made their way home greatly comforted. Greatly encouraged. So again, we see the people of God being encouraged.

And all this due to the fact that back here at Achaia, God redirected the plans of the apostle. He never would have been in Troas at this time following his own plans.

And he never would have had his final meeting with the Ephesian elders. A meeting which is so full of rich instruction that we'll look at next time, Lord willing. So Paul will at last get to Jerusalem.

[45 : 22] But it will be in a way other than he had planned. And then he will eventually get to Rome. And that too will be in another way than what he had planned.

But let's be encouraged that it's our good shepherd who laid down his life for us. Who is the one now leading us. And directing our steps. Where and when he wants us.

Let's be encouraged that disappointments of our plans are his appointments for our good. And the good of others and the glorifying of his name. That he does indeed lead us in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

There's encouragement in Christ for the believer every day. In the day of your death. And in the day of judgment. We've been given eternal encouragement.

And good hope. Do you have that this morning? Can you think about your last day on earth. And the day of judgment. And find eternal encouragement and good hope.

[46 : 27] In doing so. Or when you think of your last day on earth. And standing before your maker. Is that a very discouraging thought to you. Because you know it will be the end of all your good things.

And the beginning of your sorrow. And of your everlasting torment. There is in Jesus Christ. Eternal encouragement and good hope.

He invites all. Come to me. Come to me. And he promises forgiveness and eternal life. For all who do come. Whoever comes to me. I will in no wise cast out.

The gospel of Jesus is the most encouraging news. This poor world of sinners has ever heard. You might have come to church this morning. Lost. Speeding your way to hell.

You can go home saved. Encouraged. Looking forward. To the end of this life. And the beginning of the eternal age. Trust in the Savior.

[47 : 23] And then sing with us. About our hope. Our encouraging hope. Being in the Lord. We're going to sing from the overhead.

My hope is in the Lord. Lord. You talk about encouragement. The chorus says. For me.

He died. For me. He lives. Let's just soak on those words. As we sing them. As we head into. Another week.

Another. Into the world. Where Satan would spread his disappointments. Let's remember. For me. He died. And for me. He lives. Let's stand and sing. And encourage one another in song.

Lord. None are so blessed. As those who are in Christ. So we who are in Christ. Just raise our voices. And glad praise to you. Thank you.

[48 : 22] That you know our need for encouragement. And you bring your word to us. You bring the precious gospel. You set before us our Savior. That wonderful comforter that he is.

And then he promised to send another comforter. And encourage you to live within us. Thank you for a book full of encouragements. Cause us then to represent you better.

By being full of hope. Full of encouragement. Full of joy. As indeed you have done enough to keep us joyful for eternity. So go with us.
Keep us. Bring others this day to trust in the Savior. And to taste that eternal encouragement and good hope that's found in him. We pray in Jesus' name.
Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.