

THE REST OF THE STORY

Studies in the Book of Acts

***“We will move the world not by criticism of it, nor conformity to it –
but by combustion within it of lives ignited by the Spirit of God”***

Vance Havner

Text

Acts 20:1-15

Topic

The apostle Paul raises from the dead a young man who falls out of a third story window after dozing off during Bible study

Title

In the Sill of the Night

Acts 20:1 After the uproar had ceased, Paul called the disciples to *himself*, embraced *them*, and departed to go to Macedonia.

Acts 20:2 Now when he had gone over that region and encouraged them with many words, he came to Greece

Acts 20:3 and stayed three months. And when the Jews plotted against him as he was about to sail to Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia.

Acts 20:4 And Sopater of Berea accompanied him to Asia - also Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia.

Acts 20:5 These men, going ahead, waited for us at Troas.

Acts 20:6 But we sailed away from Philippi after the Days of Unleavened Bread, and in five days joined them at Troas, where we stayed seven days.

Acts 20:7 Now on the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight.

Acts 20:8 There were many lamps in the upper room where they were gathered together.

Acts 20:9 And in a window sat a certain young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep. He was overcome by sleep; and as Paul continued speaking, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead.

Acts 20:10 But Paul went down, fell on him, and embracing *him* said, "Do not trouble yourselves, for his life is in him."

Acts 20:11 Now when he had come up, had broken bread and eaten, and talked a long while, even till daybreak, he departed.

Acts 20:12 And they brought the young man in alive, and they were not a little comforted.

Acts 20:13 Then we went ahead to the ship and sailed to Assos, there intending to take Paul on board; for so he had given orders, intending himself to go on foot.

Acts 20:14 And when he met us at Assos, we took him on board and came to Mitylene.

Acts 20:15 We sailed from there, and the next *day* came opposite Chios. The following *day* we arrived at Samos and stayed at Trogyllium. The next *day* we came to Miletus.

Introduction

There are an awful lot of songs that use ‘traveling’ more or less as a metaphor for the progress of our lives:

1. *On the Road Again* (Willie Nelson).
2. *Ventura Highway* (America).
3. *The Long and Winding Road* (the Beatles).
4. *Life in the Fast Lane* (the Eagles).
5. *Goodbye Yellow Brick Road* (Elton John).

You can probably think of half a dozen more.

The metaphor works at a very emotional level because we suspect life is a journey that is leading somewhere.

When you become a Christian you are excited to find out that life **is** a journey and you are homeward bound. It’s why John Bunyan’s allegorical book, *Pilgrim’s Progress*, has been translated into over one hundred languages and continues to be a best seller in every generation since it was published in 1678.

In the opening verses of chapter twenty we are presented with a detailed itinerary of Paul’s journey. His earthly destination was Jerusalem and then Rome after that. Beyond those cities he was homeward bound to Heaven, to the city whose builder and maker is God.

So are you. You are homeward bound to Heaven – a pilgrim making progress along life’s road.

Along his pilgrim journey we see Paul doing at least two things: he *invested* his life for the Lord, and he *imparted* the life of the Lord.

Maybe not as dramatically as the great apostle, but we can do those things, too.

I'll organize my thoughts around two points: #1 Find Ways To Invest Your Life For The Lord As You Journey Homeward, and #2 Find Ways To Impart The Life Of The Lord As You Journey Homeward.

#1 Find Ways To Invest Your Life For The Lord As You Journey Homeward (v1-6 & 13-15)

The theme of investing for the Lord runs all through these verses. For one thing, Paul was returning to Jerusalem to bring the poor saints in the church an offering he had been collecting from the Gentile churches. The many men named in this section are believed to be representatives of those various churches. They were accompanying Paul with the funds that each church was generously donating.

Giving of your finances to the Lord is an investment that pays eternal dividends. Each of us should ask the Lord how we can give regularly, sacrificially, and joyfully to His church.

Financial giving is just the proverbial 'tip of the iceberg' when it comes to investing your life for the Lord. Let's see some other ways we can invest as we travel with Paul through the text.

Acts 20:1 After the uproar had ceased, Paul called the disciples to *himself*, embraced *them*, and departed to go to Macedonia.

Acts 20:2 Now when he had gone over that region and encouraged them with many words, he came to Greece

Paul's theme song may have been, *Born-Again a Travellin' Man*. Scholars say his travels in this section add up to over twelve thousand miles on land and sea. He was called to be an apostle and he invested his life fully in the work.

Think about your spiritual journey for a moment. What would your theme song be? It's a fun exercise but one with an eternal purpose. Each of us has a calling to fulfill. Each of us has good works that God has set before us to discover.

[Acts 20:3](#) and stayed three months. And when the Jews plotted against him as he was about to sail to Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia.

Scholars believe Paul had booked passage on a ship that took Jews back to the Holy Land for the annual feasts. Some of the Jews discovered Paul would be traveling on that ship with them. They plotted to kill him along the way – probably by tossing him overboard. God revealed the plan to Paul and he altered his travel itinerary.

It's a reminder that life itself is a gift from the Lord. Our days are numbered and He knows their end. All the more reason to invest ourselves serving Him.

[Acts 20:4](#) And Sopater of Berea accompanied him to Asia - also Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia.

[Acts 20:5](#) These men, going ahead, waited for us at Troas.

[Acts 20:6](#) But we sailed away from Philippi after the Days of Unleavened Bread, and in five days joined them at Troas, where we stayed seven days.

These guys were representing their churches and were in charge of the offerings each fellowship had taken for their Jewish brothers and sisters. We already mentioned investing by giving. We would add to that our responsibility to invest in the work of helping struggling churches, or what we normally categorize as 'missions.'

Something else was going on in the background of this journey. Paul was in Macedonia for perhaps a year. He stayed in Greece three months. During those stays he wrote Second Corinthians and Romans.

He invested himself writing the Word of God. We can invest ourselves reading it.

Let's skip the excitement in the window at Troas for a moment and look at verses thirteen through fifteen.

Acts 20:13 Then we went ahead to the ship and sailed to Assos, there intending to take Paul on board; for so he had given orders, intending himself to go on foot.

The use of the word **we** alerts you to the fact Dr. Luke had rejoined Paul, probably at Philippi where we last saw him. It's great on a mission trip to have a doctor or a nurse! The presence of Luke reminds us of the physical investment Paul made in serving the Lord. His body took a beating, literally. I mentioned Paul wrote Second Corinthians during this trip. There he said of himself,

2 Corinthians 11:23 ... in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often.

2 Corinthians 11:24 From the Jews five times I received forty *stripes* minus one.

2 Corinthians 11:25 Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep;

2 Corinthians 11:26 in journeys often, *in* perils of waters, *in* perils of robbers, *in* perils of *my own* countrymen, *in* perils of the Gentiles, *in* perils in the city, *in* perils in the wilderness, *in* perils in the sea, *in* perils among false brethren;

2 Corinthians 11:27 in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness -

2 Corinthians 11:28 besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches.

It makes any complaining I might want to do about being too busy or too tired seem immature whining! Paul was all-in in as far as what he was investing for His Lord.

At the end of verse thirteen (**Acts 20:13**), you're told Paul sent the others ahead and traveled what was a distance of twenty miles alone and **on foot**. We can't know all his reasons but we can know that it gave him time to be alone with Jesus. The busiest, most prolific apostle the world has ever seen built time into his schedule to invest in intimacy with Jesus. How can we do any less?

One more about investing that we can glean from verse thirteen. Luke indicates that Paul **had given orders**. Those traveling on this particular journey respected his leadership. They invested their lives by submitting to that leadership. It's a tough thing for us to do sometimes but God has raised-up leaders over all of us. Think of any submitting you're called upon to do as an investment.

Acts 20:14 And when he met us at Assos, we took him on board and came to Mitylene.

Acts 20:15 We sailed from there, and the next *day* came opposite Chios. The following *day* we arrived at Samos and stayed at Trogyllium. The next *day* we came to Miletus.

They must have been travel weary. We ought to often feel travel weary on our journey homeward. But we're exhorted to not be weary in doing good (Second Thessalonians 3:13) because, as it says in Galatians 6:9, **in due season we shall reap, if we do not lose heart.** The metaphor changes from investing to harvesting but it's all the same idea.

If you have financial investments you probably track their ups and downs hoping the stock market doesn't crash leaving you penniless. The investment of your life for the Lord is being protected for eternity. It's in a place where it can't be touched by robbers or rust and is earning tremendous interest. Your only concern once you finally see it in Heaven is that you should have invested more!

We skipped the fun part so let's look at it now.

#2 Find Ways To Impart The Life Of The Lord As You Journey Homeward (v7-12)

It was a rare opportunity to hear the apostle Paul expound God's Word. The church in Troas acquired a meeting room on the third floor of a building and packed-in to listen.

Acts 20:7 Now on the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight.

In passing we note that this is one of several times we're told in Scripture that the Christians met on Sunday. You can meet any day you want; we are no longer under obligation to meet on Saturday as the Sabbath; Sunday is the day the early church met so we follow that pattern.

In fact, if you want to be specific, they met Sunday nights – because everyone worked on Sunday!

Break bread refers to the custom of sharing a meal, called the love feast, followed by observing the Lord's Supper.

Paul had been speaking for about six hours, **until midnight**. It's significant because most of his hearers probably worked hard all that Sunday and would be getting up early to work on Monday.

Acts 20:8 There were many lamps in the upper room where they were gathered together.

Luke mentioned these to give you the smells, sights, and sounds of the meeting. It was murky and smoky. You'd want to sit near a window if you could. Or maybe not!

Acts 20:9 And in a window sat a certain young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep. He was overcome by sleep; and as Paul continued speaking, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead.

That's what I call an usher's nightmare! Luke, the doctor, pronounced **Eutychus** dead.

But Paul hadn't gotten to his conclusion yet!

Acts 20:10 But Paul went down, fell on him, and embracing *him* said, "Do not trouble yourselves, for his life is in him."

Paul raised Eutychus from the dead. It was a miracle.

Acts 20:11 Now when he had come up, had broken bread and eaten, and talked a long while, even till daybreak, he departed.

Acts 20:12 And they brought the young man in alive, and they were not a little comforted.

Probably many of the believers had stayed in the upper room. As a master of understatement Luke wrote that when they brought Eutychus back into the meeting **they were not a little comforted**. They took a short snack break then continued throughout the wee hours until **daybreak**.

The believers had to go straight from the meeting to a hard day's work. Paul went from there to a hard day's travel. But neither could pass up this opportunity.

It would be typical of the preacher (in this case me!) to pound you about laziness in listening. I'm just happy you're here! If this is the only place you can catch a few winks, go for it!

I do think that this episode ought to exhort us. Truth is we can be so glutted with the opportunities to hear the Bible taught that we don't think of our gathering together as something precious. Or, worse, we are drawn to only new and exciting presentations that hold our interest more.

Other than the obvious miracle, what is this resurrection teaching us? Notice Paul's unusual method for raising Eutychus from the dead. He **embraced him** while he was yet dead. It's so strange that a few, more liberal, commentators suggest that Paul gave Eutychus mouth-to-mouth resuscitation! No; Luke – a physician – said he was all the way dead, not just mostly dead.

Paul embraced him while he was yet dead. It is a picture, a type, a reminder of what Jesus did for you. While you were yet dead in trespasses and sins He embraced you with His everlasting love by dying in your place on the Cross at Calvary. In that embrace He imparts life – eternal life – to all those who will believe on Him.

Paul was in the middle of a long teaching from the Word of God. After raising Eutychus he continued in the Word. Thus there is also the symbolism that the Word imparts life – spiritual life – to the hearers.

One more thing. God used Paul to impart spiritual life. He gifted Paul to be enabled to raise the dead. We may not ever be gifted to raise the dead, but we each have a gift or gifts from God the Holy Spirit. When we exercise them we impart something alive, something spiritual, to the recipients.

Thus the exhortation: Find ways to impart the life of the Lord as you journey homeward.

You will if you are investing your life for the Lord.