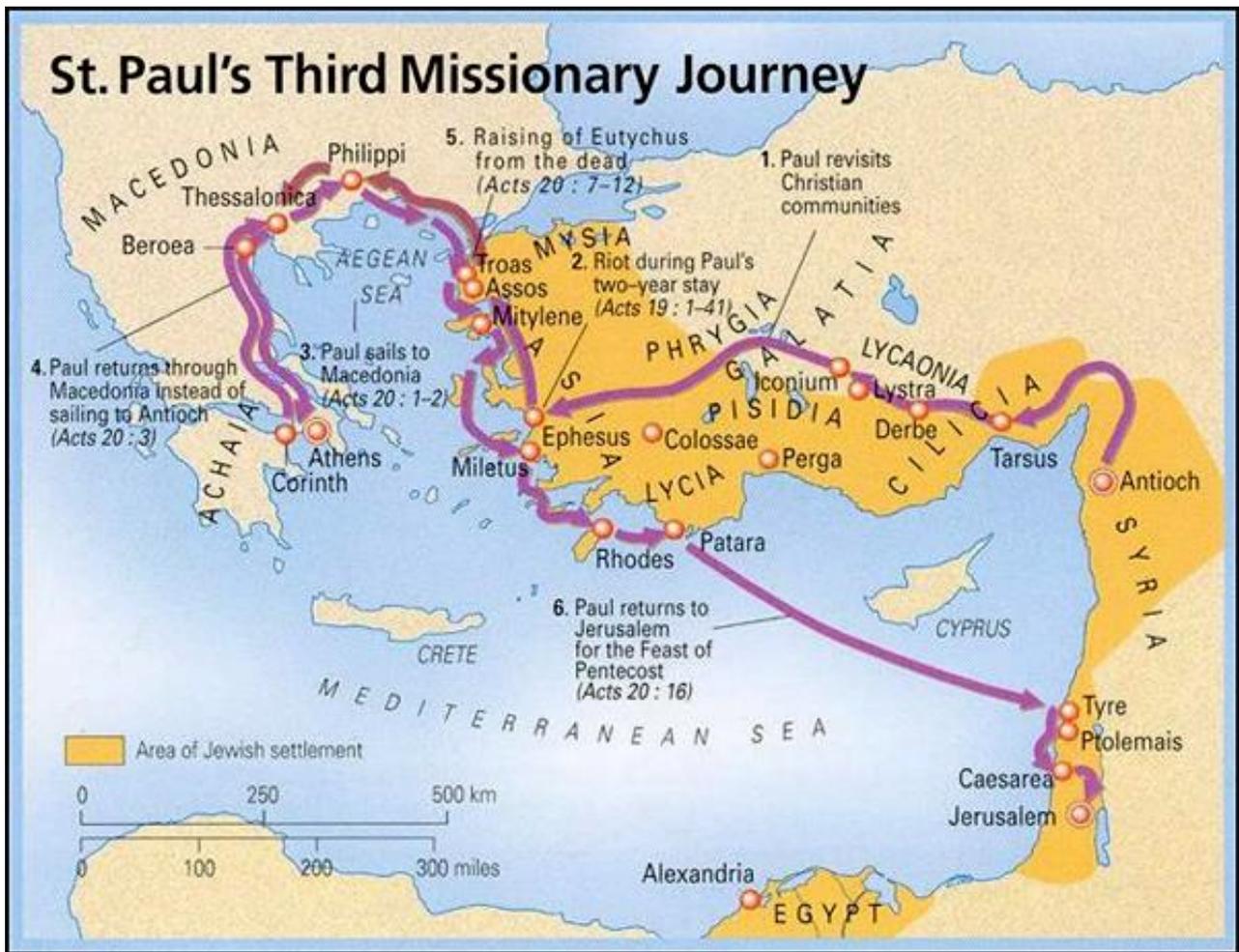


## 'Acts' - Extra Teaching Points #28

### Acts 20:1-27 (NASB)

#### Acts 20:1-6

After the uproar had ceased, Paul sent for the disciples, and when he had exhorted them and taken his leave of them, he left to go to Macedonia. <sup>2</sup> When he had gone through those districts and had given them much exhortation, he came to Greece. <sup>3</sup> And there he spent three months, and when a plot was formed against him by the Jews as he was about to set sail for Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia. <sup>4</sup> **And he was accompanied by Sopater of Berea, the son of Pyrrhus, and by Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia.** <sup>5</sup> But these had gone on ahead and were waiting for us at Troas. <sup>6</sup> We sailed from Philippi after the days of Unleavened Bread, and came to them at Troas within five days; and there we stayed seven days.



**Q: Why does Paul have such a large group of men traveling with him?**

- No doubt they were fellow workers and disciples Paul was training, but there could be another very practical reason.
- Although Luke doesn't mention it here, we know from [Acts 24:17](#); [1Cor. 16:1-4](#); [2Cor. 8-9](#); and [Rom. 15:25-33](#) that Paul was collecting money from the Gentile churches to take to the poor Christians in Jerusalem.
- Paul may have wanted both the safety and the financial accountability a large group of witnesses would have provided.

## Acts 20:7-12

*On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul began talking to them, intending to leave the next day, and **he prolonged his message until midnight.** <sup>8</sup> There were many lamps in the upper room where we were gathered together. <sup>9</sup> **And there was a young man named Eutychus sitting on the window sill, sinking into a deep sleep; and as Paul kept on talking, he was overcome by sleep and fell down from the third floor and was picked up dead.** <sup>10</sup> But Paul went down and fell upon him, and after embracing him, he said, “Do not be troubled, for his life is in him.” <sup>11</sup> **When he had gone back up and had broken the bread and eaten, he talked with them a long while until daybreak, and then left.** <sup>12</sup> They took away the boy alive, and were greatly comforted.*

### **Q: What can we learn from Luke’s account of Sunday worship at Troas?**

- We get a glimpse of what “church” was like in the first century, and how we ought to be today.
  - We see the same pattern of meeting on the first day of the week, as opposed to the Jewish commandment to keep the Sabbath. ([John 20:19](#); [1Cor. 16:2](#); [Rev. 1:10](#))
  - We see that breaking bread (communion) was a central part of their Sunday worship ([Luke 24:30](#); [Acts 2:42, 46](#); [1Cor. 10:16](#)).
  - We see that they used their meetings as opportunities to learn more of the apostles’ teaching ([Acts 2:42](#)).
  - In their culture, Sunday (the first day of the week) was a workday, yet their devotion to the apostles’ teaching was so strong they stayed all night... knowing they had to work the next day.
- Eutychus (his name means “Lucky”) was probably between 8 and 14 years old.
  - Paul didn’t have simple, seeker-sensitive messages for the church, and the young people in the church didn’t get a “dumbed-down” version of the teaching.
  - Paul taught the truth, without shortcutting its complexity, but did his best to explain it in a way his audience could understand it.

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## **Extra info about Paul’s mission:**

Not only was Paul collecting money, teaching and encouraging the churches, and training disciples on his missionary journey, it was on this leg of the journey Paul wrote his letter to the Romans.

- Paul’s letter to the Romans is his masterpiece.
  - It is one of the most theologically dense books in the Bible, and gives us incredible insight into how Paul understood our relationship to God, each other, and God’s mission.
  - Paul’s letter to the Romans helps us understand how the Old Testament and the New Testament represent one story that is still in motion today!
- In [Romans 15:24](#), Paul gives his main reason for wanting to write to the Roman church and eventually visit them: **He wants to take the Gospel to Spain, and have the Roman church help him the way the Antioch church had.**

We have no evidence that Paul ever made it to Spain as he dreamed of doing. It is most likely Paul died a martyr’s death in Rome, and never saw the fulfillment of his dream of taking the Gospel to Spain.

- However, without the dream of going to Spain, Paul may not have ever written the Letter to the Romans – not that he didn’t teach that material everywhere he went – for, without this incentive, we possibly might not have his teaching written down and preserved for us today.

### **Q: Was Paul’s mission and ambition to go to Spain a failure just because he never got to do it? What can we learn about how God works in our lives from Paul’s experience?**

- It wasn’t a failure! We have his letter to the Romans because of his dream.
- It may be that God allows us to have dreams and ambitions that He doesn’t intend to let us achieve, in order to move us to do something else He really wants from us!
  - Paul wanted to take the Gospel to Spain before he died; but through his letter to the Romans, God has used Paul to take the Gospel to every nation in the world for the last 2000 years!
  - How do we know that God isn’t planning on using something *we* do, in pursuit of a dream, to do more than we could ask or imagine ([Eph. 3:20](#))?

## Acts 20:13-16

But we, going ahead to the ship, set sail for Assos, intending from there to take Paul on board; for so he had arranged it, intending himself to go by land. <sup>14</sup> And when he met us at Assos, we took him on board and came to Mitylene. <sup>15</sup> Sailing from there, we arrived the following day opposite Chios; and the next day we crossed over to Samos; and the day following we came to Miletus. <sup>16</sup> **For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus so that he would not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hurrying to be in Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost.**

### Q: Why didn't Paul want to spend time in Ephesus?

- The only reason we are given, is that he wanted to get to Jerusalem by Pentecost, if at all possible.
- What is implied here, is that Paul must have thought that getting into Ephesus was going to be a lot easier than getting back out!
  - This could have been because of his enemies in Ephesus, or the large sum of money he was carrying... or both!

## Acts 20:17-27

From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called to him the elders of the church. <sup>18</sup> And when they had come to him, he said to them, "You yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, how **I was with you the whole time,** <sup>19</sup> **serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials** which came upon me through the plots of the Jews; <sup>20</sup> **how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house,** <sup>21</sup> **solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.** <sup>22</sup> "And now, behold, bound by the Spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there, <sup>23</sup> **except that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me.** <sup>24</sup> **"But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God.** <sup>25</sup> "And now, behold, I know that all of you, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, will no longer see my face. <sup>26</sup> **"Therefore, I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men.** <sup>27</sup> **"For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God.**

### Q: Why did Paul call the Elders of Ephesus to meet with him?

- He didn't call them to preach to them. He called them so he could say goodbye, and to reflect on his time with them.
  - Paul spent more time with these men in Ephesus (3 years) than he did with any other church or its leaders.
- He wanted to remind them of his pattern of ministry and the significance of his example.

### Q: What was the pattern of Paul's ministry?

- [Vs. 18](#): He spent his time with the disciples; he didn't just meet with them on Sundays.
- [Vs. 19](#): He served with humility, tears, and trials.
  - His humility was seen in not quitting when ministry brought him to tears and put in him difficult trials.
- [Vs. 20](#): He didn't shrink back to avoid controversy; he taught them, both publicly and privately, anything that could benefit them, without holding back.
- [Vs. 21](#): He taught ANYONE who wanted to know, how to get off the road they were on, and turn toward God.

**Q: What is the significance of Paul's example?**

- Paul expects these elders, as he does all servants of the Lord, to imitate him ([1Cor. 4:16](#); [1Cor. 11:1](#); [Phil 3:17](#); [Phil 4:9](#); [1Thess. 1:6](#); [2Thess. 3:9](#)).
  - We need to spend our time with other disciples.
  - We need to expect tears and trials, and respond to them with humility.
  - We need to stand up and teach whatever is profitable, and not shrink back to avoid controversy... whether privately or publicly!
  - We need to teach ANYONE who wants to hear, about repentance and faith in Jesus, without trimming the message to make it easier to get across, or more palatable for them to accept!

**Q: Why does Paul declare that he is innocent of the blood of all men, as he is saying goodbye?**

- Paul does essentially the same thing in [1Thess. 2:9-12](#). He points to his example, then declares his innocence.
    - In Paul's day, there were lots of people who made a living as traveling teachers.
    - They weren't in it for the best interests of their hearers and followers; they were shearing the sheep... not feeding them!
    - Paul knew that, after his departure, there would be those who would claim he was one of those professional religionists, and couldn't be trusted.
  - Paul was declaring that his example proved he was not doing what was best for himself, but that he had told them all what was best for them.
    - If someone disregarded his teaching, it wasn't because of his poor example, or that he was profiting from his teaching... so he was not to blame for anyone's rejection of the gospel!
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## Follow Up Assignment

Q: Do you treat church on Sunday the same way the Christians at Troas did?

- If not, how do you treat it differently?

Q: Paul's ambition was to take the Gospel to Spain. He wrote the letter to the Romans in pursuit of that ambition. What is your ambition for the gospel, and what are you doing to make it happen?

- How does it make you feel to know that God may not let you fulfill your Gospel ambitions, yet still encourages you to pursue them in order to get what He really wants from you?

Q: Can you declare you are "*innocent of the blood of all men*" the way Paul did? Why, or why not?