

Acts
 “Jesus” The Sequel
III.) Chp. 13-28 “Witnesses to the end of the earth”
Chp. 18:22-28 The royal route to Rome (3rd trip)
20:1-16
 “Groggy in grace”

I.) Intro.

II.) Vs. 1-6 Sustaining grace

III.) Vs. 7-12 Fortunate grace

IV.) Vs. 13-16 Walking in grace

I.) Intro.

Last week in Demetrius’ speech before the chamber of commerce in Ephesus he delivered his four-fold case against Christianity: “*Christianity is dangerous it could cut into your prosperity, it will cause you to lose your popularity and your power, why becoming a Christian is just unpatriotic.*” That is the best the world can do when finding fault against Christianity, for it can not attack its truths all it can do is attack the results of applying those truths compared to those that don’t! **The challenge for us Christians is to live for Christ in the midst of a world that is directly opposed to our way of life.** God has provided the Church as the means by which we can do this. Folk’s we have nothing to fear, TRUTH is on our side! So what is it that will help us take our stand for truth? Well, as we shall see in these verses **it is fellowship with others who are in the same battle.**

II.) Vs. 1-6 Sustaining grace

Vs. 1 In verses 2-6 Luke covers about a year’s time and the first thing I notice is found in the words, “*After the uproar had ceased.*” The uproar was described in chapter 19 when 30,000 people spent 2 hours shouting “*Great is Diana of the Ephesians!*” Paul did not leave the city until the hysterical mob was dismissed then he goes back to the Church to

encourage them, before he left. One of the great reasons to meet together for a Church service is, **FELLOWSHIP**. When the world had been shouting at for two hours there is was a great need to just get together and encourage each other. That's what fellowship will do for you! **It will sustain you in God's glorious grace, after the world had shouted at you.** You will be able to go back to a place, where people feel the same way about things as you do.

Vs. 2-3 Paul came to Corinth, then Athens and stayed there three months no doubt doing the same as he did in Macedonia. His plan was to leave from there and sail directly to Syria in order to make it back to Jerusalem in time of the Passover. Luke tells us that Paul sailed across the Aegean Sea to where the Church's of Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea were and while there he "*encouraged them with many words*" (verse 2). Paul shared the Word of God with them and we are also told in the Epistles that Paul received an offering for the suffering Church in Jerusalem. But Luke tells us that Paul had gotten word of a plot to kill him while on board the ship (verse 3) and decides to go by land and then take a ship to Troas.

My point is that **staying in fellowship kept Paul alive!** The teaching of the Word of God and the worship of the Person of God **kept him from getting on the wrong ship!** **Saints, the world is going to yell at you and try to get you into things that can harm you but fellowship will keep you from hopping on board with something or someone that would destroy you.** There are **two important things that Church life ought to have in order to keep you from things that will harm you:**

1. **The teaching of the Word of God:** Paul did not offer them entertainment, or psychological platitudes but the Truth that transforms hearts. The Bible contains truths that when applied will keep you from hidden danger.
2. **The worship of the person of God:** Now remember I said that in the Epistles that Paul received an offering for the suffering Church in Jerusalem. **Did you realize that when we receive the offering it is an act of worship before our God who alone has provided all that we need to sustain us?** When they contributed to the love offering it showed what was on their heart. They were giving out of what God had already given them which showed not only that they cared for others more than themselves but that they trusted in God to provide.

Vs. 4-6 Paul wanted to get to Jerusalem in a hurry but could not go the direct route and had to travel by land from Corinth to Philippi (around 300 miles). He is bringing with him this entourage (*including himself and Luke, 9 guys representing the different Churches that had given an offering.*) Luke, in the first person, says that the guys mentioned in verse 4 sail from Philippi (*or Neapolis as it was the harbor for Philipp*) across the Aegean Sea back to Asia and the port city of Troas. Luke says in verse six that after the feast of unleavened bread which Paul and Luke must have celebrated with the Church at Philippi that sailed to join them. Almost hidden in this travel log of Luke are the words, “and in five days” joined them! When Paul had done this same trip in Acts 16:11 it took only two days! Folks, **staying in fellowship will help you a great deal more when the journey you’re on faces tough sailing or delays.**

Have you ever noticed when it is that we most often run into delays? It's always when I'm in a hurry to be some where. One of the most difficult things we Christians face is that terrible word "WAIT". But as much as I don't like waiting I really don't like waiting alone! **Sure it's discouraging to not get where you want to go but it's far worse to be by yourself while you wait!**

Fellowship with Christians will:

- **Sustain you in God's glorious grace, after the world has shouted at you!**
- **Warn you when you are about to get on board with something or someone that would destroy you!**
- **Encourage you when the journey you're on faces delays or tough sailing!**

III.) Vs. 7-12 Fortunate grace

This is the earliest recorded description of a Christian worship service and we get a great look at what the early Church service looked like. As I studied this section I came up with **five qualities that a church service ought to have:**

1. Vs. 7, 8 "Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together... the upper room where they were gathered together": Three things come to mind here in these two verses which make up the **basic ingredients** that without these three things you can not have a Church service, **Time, People and a Place!**
 - a. **First day of the week:** What is interesting is that the believers gathered not on the Sabbath (*Saturday*) but rather **Sunday** the first day of the week. This became known as the "*Lords day*" because it was the day when Jesus rose from the dead and the Church was raised in

power at Pentecost. There are still some Christian groups that want to maintain worshipping God on Saturday and I have no problem if that is their wish as Paul said, in Rom 14:5-6 *“One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it.”* But some persist in making this an issue of fellowship, saying that we are not going to heaven if we don’t worship on Saturday. “If they are going to keep the Sabbath as God had commanded as a sign of the Mosaic Covenant that He had with Israel then they need to do so as they did.” You see the Jews could not travel more than 2/3 of a mile nor kindle a fire. So the moment those folks get in their cars and drive more than 2/3 of a mile to Church they have broken the Sabbath.

- b. **Disciples came together:** Now again we see something interesting, the Church service was for **“followers”** of Jesus. The Church service was not designed around making it comfortable for those who were not believers. Now if they wanted to come I’m sure they were allowed in but the worship service was a time when the disciples came together.
- c. **The upper room:** These folks worked on Sundays as it was a normal work day and there weren’t buildings that they meant in so this was most likely a persons house in a room large enough to hold the

Church. It's true the Church is not a building but for the Church to meet you have to have a place large enough from them to do so.

2. Vs. 7 "*to break bread*": These words appear twice here and then in verse 11. It is assumed here that the "*breaking of bread*" in this verse is "*communion*". So the second quality the Church service ought to have is celebration about the finished work of Jesus on our behalf. That's **worshipping the Lord for Who He is and what He has done.** If the Church does not gather around the person and work of Jesus then it is not a Church service!
3. Vs. 7,11 "*Paul...spoke to them and continued his message until midnight.... And talked a long while, even till daybreak*": The best we can guess is that **Paul taught two 6 hour messages.** There ought to be no more jokes about me being long winded in teaching! The main thing is not the length but rather **every Church service ought to have regular instruction from the Word of God!** It is interesting to note that this was not just in sermon form but our word dialogue comes from this word here. Paul taught and then had a Q and A time with them.
4. Vs. 11 "*Now when he had come up, had broken bread and eaten, and talked a long while*": Though this is the same words as above in verse 7 the fact that Luke adds "*and eaten*" leads me to believe that what he is describing here is a "*love feast*" or potluck as we call them today. Simple put **every Church service ought to have a regular time of just fellowshiping with each other.**

5. Vs. 10-12 “*he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead... Paul went down, fell on him, and embracing him said, Do not trouble yourselves, for his life is in him*”: Here then is the last but most important **ingredient** the **Church service ought to have, the presence of God!** He may not always show up and **raise the dead or awaken the sleepy**, although at times, it would be a welcomed sight. Jesus said in Matt 18:20, “*For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.*” How horrible it is that by the time Revelation was written we read of Jesus’ words to the Church in Laodicea, “*Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.*” Folks, do you realize **many don’t experience Jesus’ at church because He stands at the door trying to get in.**

Five **ingredients** of every Church service:

- **Time, people and place**
- A time when we gather for the **worship of God**
- A time of instruction from the **Word of God**
- Fellowship with the **people of God**
- Most importantly the **presence of God**

Let’s take a look at Eutychus’ fall as Luke tells us:

Paul started teaching around 6PM and continued to do so until around midnight. In order to see they lit many lamps on the 3rd story where they were meeting. A teenager named Eutychus (**fortunate**) was fighting sleep and had placed himself by an open window to get fresh air to keep him self awake but the warmth of the room and the hypnotic flicker

of the flames caused him to fall into deep sleep and out a window to his death. Perhaps a sign could have been placed over the door which read, “*Falling asleep in Church can be hazardous to your health!*” Based upon this story I think we can draw some practical applications for why people, “*pardon the pun*” **fall away from church:**

- **Not having their feet on solid ground:** Some get all caught up in emotionalism and not the practical walking with the Lord.
- **Sitting on the edge with to good of a view of the world:** Some people fall away from Church because they are *living on the windowsill of the world* even though they are inside of the Church.
- **The warmth and light of the Church becomes more important than being a light in a dark world:** Some stop reaching out to a world that needs to come and experience the presence of the Lord as “Church” becomes more important than Christ.

What can we do for those who have fallen from the Church? Do as Paul did go down and give them the love and care that only Jesus can provide!

IV.) Vs. 13-16 Walking in grace

Vs. 13-16 This is the last of Luke’s travel log concerning Paul’s travels. Practically Paul’s decision to not get on the boat with the rest of his team made since as it would take them a whole day to sail to Assos from Troas, while Paul could walk it in under ten hours. But I think Paul wanted time by himself with the Lord and that ten hours would provide just that. Folk’s as great as it is to hang with the Church there is even an more important thing we need to do and that is spend time alone with the Lord.