

Acts 20:1-38 Paul's Leadership Conference

Intro: Moment of truth: How many of you have ever fallen asleep in Church before?

A)Lady named Carol – Church I Oregon – every Sunday front row – nestle up to hubby – head on shoulder.

One man who had a habit of nodding off once sermon started – ear trained – stand!

A)One Sunday Pastor – gave a reverse invitation Don't care if burn in hell – let him Stand – shot up

B)Looked around – quickly said: **Pastor I don't know what we are voting for.... Only ones.....!**

C)Acts 20 begins with the account of a man named Eutychus who fell asleep Paul's preaching

After the uproar had ceased, **Ephesus** Paul called the disciples to himself, embraced them, and departed to go to Macedonia. 2 Now when he had gone over that region and encouraged them with many words, he came to Greece 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. 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. 5 These men, going ahead, waited for us at Troas. 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.

So after the riot in Ephesus Paul crossed the Aegean Sea into Macedonia,

A)where he encouraged struggling churches, then continued down into Greece, doing the same.

B)His intent was to sail from Corinth to Jerusalem with an offering for the beleaguered mother church.

C)However, when he learned of a plot to do away with him at sea, he eluded his foes by traveling back up through Macedonia & crossing the sea again into Troas

D)Troas was the **city where several years before he had experienced the vision of the man of Macedonia** 1) imploring him to “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” Acts 16

E)In Troas Paul had a reunion with his traveling companions mentioned in v.4 { **Ministry team**

1)Troas, adjacent to ancient Troy, was the peaceful setting for the remarkable service described in vs 7–12.

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

Picture the scene: The room is packed – the air is hot in Middle East – which would make for a stuffy uncomfortable environment.

Now it is also worth noting that – Sunday in that culture was a work day.

A)So it is safe to say – this man Eutychus like many others in the room had put in a full days work.

B)Paul would work during the day and teach in the evening

C)That particular night – Paul was a bit long winded the study went **on and on and on** – going on midnight

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.

D)The tenses of the Greek verbs portray poor Eutychus as being gradually overcome despite his **struggle to remain awake.**

E)Finally the stifling room and the hypnotic flickering of the flames did their work.

1)Eutychus' eyes shut, he relaxed, **and out he went**—headlong to the pavement three floors below.

Now that is quite a Bible study interruption.

A)We have had some doozies here but – no one has dropped dead ---- yet

10 But Paul went down, fell on him, and embracing him said, "Do not trouble yourselves, for his life is in him." 11 Now when he had come up, had broken bread and eaten, and talked a long while, even till daybreak, he departed. 12 And they brought the young man in alive, and they were not a little comforted.

That is Luke's way of saying they were really excited

A) Never a dull moment with Paul – Right

B) Before we move on from this story let me just say this:

1) Falling asleep in church really does not concern me.

C) It can happen for any number of reasons, both good and bad.

What concerns me are the thousands who go to a Church every Sunday – with their bodies awake but their souls asleep!

A) Sad reality today is there are Innumerable churchgoers who appear to be perfectly awake but are spiritually asleep.

B) How avoid being asleep in the light

C) When - Listening take notes

1) Then Pray in –

D) Look to Apply –

1) Exercise is the key to physical health –
Also Spiritual health

Dead Sea vs the Sea of Galilee

A) Both are supplied by the Jordan River

B) Dead Sea – has only inflow but no outflow

1) No life

C) Sea of Galilee has an inflow and an outflow

1) Life is the result

D) Need an inflow and outflow

1) Pray in –

2) Seek for application

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.

¹⁴ And when he met us at Assos, we took him on board and came to Mitylene. ¹⁵ We sailed from there, and the next day came opposite Chios. (Ki/Os) The following day we arrived at Samos and stayed at Trogu/lium. The next day we came to Miletus.

¹⁶ 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 at Jerusalem, if possible, on the Day of Pentecost.

A) The Apostle Paul is on his way to Jerusalem and he is in a hurry to get there.

B) His goal is to make it there for the feast of Pentecost –

1) For that reason he passes by the City of Ephesus on his Journey.

C) He just didn't have the time to be with the believers in this Church that he had Pastored for 3 yrs.

1) But being so close he could not pass up an opportunity to meet with the Elders of that church

D) So Paul stopped at Miletus and called for them to come to him. V.17

17 From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church.

A) It was about a 20 mile journey – but they came eagerly to meet with their beloved Pastor.

Terms Elder, Pastor, and Bishop are used interchangeably in the NT to describe the same office.

A) Elder- describes the **MAN**– Mature in the things of the Lord.

B) Bishop describes the **MINISTRY**– Overseer

1) Pastor describes the **METHOD** – Feed & care for or Shepherd.

D) Relevance for you today: **Who are you called to oversee?**

1) Who are you called to feed and take care of?

Home group/ family/ team/ work crew/ students

His meeting with them is laid out for us here in Acts 20:18-38!

A) It was sort of a mini – Leadership Conference.

B) How many of you have ever wanted to go to a Pastors or Leadership conference?

1) Tonight is your chance courtesy of the apostle Paul

C) Three sessions

1) **Session #1** V.17-21 Paul describes the faithfulness of a servant

B) Session #2 In V. 22-27 Keys to running with Joy

1) **Session #3** V.28-38 The Priorities of serving well.

Paul begins describes the faithfulness of a servant

A) Using himself as an example – he points out 3 key things about his ministry in Ephesus v. 18-21

B) He is going to discuss what was the Manner of his ministry. {**Most of our time here**}

C) Then he is going to talk about what was the **Motive** of his ministry.

D) Finally he will talk about what was the **Message** of his ministry.

First the Manner of his ministry. Acts 20:18-19
18 And when they had come to him, he said to them: "You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you, 19 serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews;

There are four things that I want us to see concerning the Manner of Paul's ministry.

#1 He ministered in Humility. *Serving the Lord with all Humility.*

A) Not a celebrity Pastor- world revolves around him

B) Jesus washed feet – servant – definitely the posture of a servant.

1) Paul followed in his footsteps

C) Here in America the "Best Pastors" are the most known – twitter FB IG

D) China it is the opposite – the most impactful Pastors are relatively unknown

1) Arrested or killed

2 Corinthians 1:12

"For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, and more abundantly toward you."

The second thing that marked the manner of Paul's ministry was Tears!

A) Serving the Lord and walking with Jesus- means getting so intensely involved in people's struggles that you cry over them.

B) Friends who are struggle in their marriage – a friend struggle in sin.

C) Jesus wept over Jerusalem - Luke 13:34

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were not willing!"

D) Jesus was a man of sorrow acquainted with Grief - Wept over Sin – Burden for the Lost!

1) Walking with Jesus – same heart produced in us – Paul had that!

E) Prayer week – prayers for the lost and broken

The third thing that marked the manner of Paul's ministry was Trials.

A) The trials which happened to me – by the plotting of the Jews.

B) Walking with Jesus and serving Jesus will include hardship.

C) A pastor once jokingly defined "**the great tribulation**" as "the one you're in!"

Because ministry is the place of God's training for you / and trials are a big part of our growing process

A) You are going to encounter situations that are all a part of God's testing & trying of you.

² My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith

produces patience. ⁴ But let patience have *its* perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. James 1:2-3

B) Most people get involved in ministry thinking it is God's way of doing something thru your life.

1) Quickly discover his way of doing something **IN U!**

C) And there will be trials is because there is an enemy Who wants to see you do anything but be used by the Lord.

D) So He is going to come against you / more involved you get the greater the warfare.

1) **TRIALS – PLOTTINGS –**

The Fourth thing that marked the manner of Paul's ministry was consistency.

A) To make this last point I want to read to you from the KJV of v.18 –

Acts 20:18

“And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons.”

Bb) I hope you realize that in your Christian life personally & in the ministry definitely there will be seasons.

C) Just like there are seasons in nature - there will be seasons in your walks

Sometimes it is like Fall – Change

A) Things are changing – leaves falling – changing colors – things are changing –

B) Most people don't like Change –

1) 20 yrs ago - Painted the building from a drab gray with blue trim – to cream

C) You would have thought we desecrated the Mona Lisa – or a Rembrandt

D) Everyone had an opinion – much of it was negative

1) I have not picked a paint color in this building since

E) Have to learn to pick your battles – paint colors wasn't going to be one of them.

Sometimes there is change – people move on – ministries change focus or shut down.

A) The season of fall – Key is you have to stay consistent – recognize – season

B) Things are going to ramp down for a while – not a time to cast vision – fall on deaf ears

C) You just have to be steady!

Then comes Winter – Winter is cold – things die in winter or become dormant

A) I don't like winter in real life and I don't like it in ministry. Especially when winters are long

C) But there are those times when things just shut down!

D) Winter is hard in ministry – but it is necessary

1) Winter can be a time of Rest –

E) Break in the normal grind

1) Key stay consistent – don't panic

Because the thing that you need to remember about winter times –

A) where is the work going on? **Below the surface.**

B) **Beneath the ground** - where you can't see it - roots are getting deeper & stronger

1) Things are drinking in the nourishment Strengthen roots

C) Because after winter comes spring – Love spring

In spring there is life – in spring there are blossoms in the spring – new life.

A) In the Spring you get to see a lot of the fruit of your consistency

B) Spring is followed by summer – the fruit turns into a harvest – you enjoy the fruit of your labor

So these four things marked the *MANNER* of Paul's ministry. –

A) Humility, Tears, Trials and Consistency

B) The next thing we want to look is what helped Paul stay consistent amidst the tears and trials

C) The Motive of his ministry: Found in the simple statement in V.19 Serving the Lord!

The Motive of ministry is not about serving people or even meeting needs.

A) Never be able to please all the people.

B) People are fickle – **Always a new flavor** –

C) If your motive is to please people – You will be striving to attain their favor –

1) leads to striving to maintain it - **FAST ROAD TO BURN OUT!**

D) Paul knew that the key to ministry was not in serving people, primarily

1) but in 1st serving the Lord !

E) Remembering that the sheep are God's sheep & the only things we have to give to them is what Jesus has 1st given to us !

Finally the Message of his ministry: V.20-21

20 how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, 21 testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. 22

Style

Preaching – Proclaimed

Teaching – taught

Content:

Held back nothing that was profitable.

A) Today Churches – lets not offend – so we are not going to talk about sin. Or Blood.

B) Preached repentance!

1) Not easy or popular – don't tell me to change but necessary.

C) Paul was faithful to serve with Humility – Serve in all seasons – trials tears

1) Faithful to proclaim the whole message – not just what people want to hear.

D) Last days – Itching ears – tell me what I want to hear!

1) Tell me God is loving and accepting

V.22 Session 2 V. 22-27 Keys to running with Joy

22 And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, 23 except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me.

24 But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

25 "And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more. 26 Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. 27 For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.

B) We have noted that key phrase in this whole sermon is found in v.24 –

But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus,

Paul's view of his life and ministry was that of a Runner!

A) Paul was running to finish his race with Joy – which means that he was running with Joy!

B) He was enjoying the run and in this section of his sermon – Paul gives us three insights that are involved in running the race with Joy.

#1 Running with Joy involves being led by the Spirit. V.22 “And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem,”

A) There is great Joy in living a surrendered life –

B) There is great Joy in knowing that the Holy Spirit is directing You!

C) Even when it is hard- trials produce....

1) I am here because the Holy Spirit has led me here or allowed me to be here

#2 Running with Joy involves being content not to know in detail what tomorrow will bring.

22 And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, *not knowing the things that will happen to me there*, 23 except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me

A) Paul didn't know how tomorrow was going to play out except for the fact that it was going to involve hardship.

Instead of worrying about tomorrow or fretting over things that I can't control. –

A) It means – making the most of the moment and doing what we can do. –

B) Continuing to seek to fulfill our calling.

#3 Running with Joy involves staying the course. V.24-27

A) Paul had been commissioned by Jesus to testify of the gospel of Grace.

24 so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

Now here is what is really interesting about Paul and his message –

A) Paul saw people respond – he saw people repent – but he saw far more reject – Almost every city – riot – run out of town.

B) Paul stayed the course – he didn't waver from the message – he didn't try to water it down or twist it or – make it more palatable.

25 "And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more. 26 Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. 27 **For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.**

C) This is what he means in v.27 – **didn't shun to declare to them the whole counsel of God.**

1) Paul was true to that message!

D) Doesn't mean – He preached the whole OT – but that he was in his 3 yrs in Ephesus –

1) true to the message – Overall – picture of Salvation

E) So in session 2 Paul gives us some key things to consider about running with Joy

Final session #3 Priorities in ministry

A) Paul begins V.28 - **Take heed to yourself and to all the flock.** Notice order

B) First, take heed to yourself! = “Keep watch over yourselves.”

Bb) The importance in this for those who want to be used by the Lord is not to have a priority on self/ **but for preparation of self.**

1) Heart and life prepared for the calling!

C) If I am going to be one who is *effectively, consistently ministering to others* –

1) I need to be cultivating *my own walk with Lord*

D) If I am going to be one whom the Lord uses to **Bless others** –

1) I must first be one - Who is being blessed by Jesus!

Guy went on business trip to France while there picks up a present for his wife.

A) Trinket box glow in the dark (Doesn't work) directions are in French/

B) His wife has a friend over who happens to speak French –

1) she reads words on the back this needs to sit in the sun for it to glow.

C) If we are going to be those who will effectively shine as lights in this dark world we need to sit in the Son Light / Presence of the SON!

D) Your own Devotional life – Prayer life.

1) Amazing Jesus wants you to spend time with him!

Luke 6 called them to himself – first – ministry 2nd

So first Take heed to self: because if you're in right relationship with the Lord, blessings will flow through you to the **flock of your family**, to the Sunday-school kids you teach, to the people to whom you witness.

Second, take heed to the flock which H.S. has made you overseers.

A.) Paul is pointing out to elders - *H.S. placed you there!*

Paul is reminding these men – that their calling was from God- He placed them there.

A) Their call was to Shepherd – to Feed the Flock – to care for the Flock – to be there for the flock. –

B) And Paul reminds them of how Precious the Flock of God is.....

shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

C) The Church is important to God because His name is on it *The church of God* / Important to the Son - because His blood was shed for it

D) And it is important to the Holy Spirit because He is calling & equipping people to minister in it !

Notice again the Phrase *the church of God* - which he purchased with His blood!

A) Proof text for Deity of Christ/ whose church?/ Church of God - God's Church which he purchased w/ his blood.

So take heed – watch out for yourself and for the Flock.

A) Watch out for two things!

B) #1 V.29 **Watch out for wolves** that will come in from the outside not sparing the flock or seeking to take advantage of the flock.

C) **Wolves in sheep's clothing** – they look like a sheep – but underneath the exterior – is wolf.

D) You can always tell a wolf – by what they eat. – **Wolves eat sheep!**

1) Prey on the sheep – take advantage of sheep!

#2 V.30,31 Watch out for men who are among you who will rise up – Men who are in your midst – who have their own agenda.

A) Speaking perverse things – drawing attention to themselves {Perverse = twist or distort the truth.

B) Many cult leaders – started in the Church

The Shepherds job is not just to feed the sheep but it also is to warn the sheep. {Fattening up Kill

A) Warn about false teachers & false teaching –

B) Isn't that a bit judgmental – narrow – why can't we just be tolerant.

Think of it this way:

Years ago, an eight-and-a-half-foot Burmese python escaped in Medford, Oregon. When hungry, he was capable of eating small animals or even babies.

Now let's pretend that happened in a neighborhood here in Vista - and I said "Folks, there's an eight-and-a-half-foot python slithering around **and I know where he is.**

But I don't want to offend or frighten anyone unnecessarily, so I won't be too specific in telling you his location." **You'd think I was crazy! / SICK**

Or what would you think if I took a bottle of poison – and said – Poison is such a negative word. – Doesn't sound nice

A) I will re-label it – Alternative beverage. – You would have me arrested

B) If you saw someone – getting ready to drink a bottle of poison – you would scream – put that away – it will kill you.

C) It is the Shepherds responsibility to warn the sheep – Poison it will kill you! – Expect that!

31 Therefore watch, {Stay on the lookout} and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.

#3 Remember to rely on God's Grace

32 "So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

A) Saved by grace

B) We grow in grace – build you up

C) Sanctified by Grace

Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus

Lord said to Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:9 - "My grace is sufficient for you my Power is made perfect in your weakness!"

A) My grace is sufficient! It is **sustaining**; it **strengthens** - it gives me hope!

#2 Stay pure in your motives v.33

³³ I have coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel.

³⁴ Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me.

A) Paul said when I was with you I didn't covet anyone's gold or silver – I wasn't in it for the money. Monetary gain

B) But **I worked with my hands** – Doesn't mean that a minister shouldn't get paid a salary – Paul taught a workmen is worthy of his wages

C) **But that can't be the motivation** – Willing to work

D) **Motivation is serve Jesus!** – Not money/ power/ popularity or position.

#3 Remember to stay Generous in your service V.35

³⁵ I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember

the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

#3 Remember to stay Generous in your Serving.

Knowing this it is more blessed to give than to receive. V.35

Human sinful nature gives to get

A) But it is the nature of Jesus – that gives to just to give – gives to those who can't give back – can't return it –

B) Parents realize – Christmas – joy of giving – the smile on your face.

C) Not only is there a holy satisfaction – but there is also a special blessing

1) God rewards givers -

D) God gave – The Greatest gift – His Son –

1) Gift that blesses us - Salvation

³⁶ And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. ³⁷ Then they all wept freely, and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him, ³⁸ sorrowing most of all for the words which he spoke, that they would see his face no more. And they accompanied him to the ship.