

**I. Leaving a hard year and entering a new one. The Lord says to be confident and seek the kingdom.**

**Matt.6:31-34**

- A. How do we avoid anxiety? By seeking the kingdom and righteousness of God. Converting to Christ as the saving Lord and walking with him.
- B. An example is in the book of Acts...

**II. Acts 20 is a record of Paul's 3<sup>rd</sup> missionary (a five-year project). 2 main purposes on this trip.**

**Local/Global**

- A. Strengthening the churches he had planted on previous two journeys. 18:23  
The churches in Asia, Macedonia, Achaia, and Greece.
- B. Collecting relief funds for the Jerusalem church. (2 Cor)
  - 1. Promoting unity and giving tangible aid.
  - 2. A broad objective to connect believers across the racial divide between Jew and Gentile (a very deep divide indeed)

**III. Acts 20:1-16. Doing what comes next...after 3 years in Ephesus, 2 more years in travel...**

- A. When the uproar had ceased. 1
  - 1. The Ephesian Artemis riot. Caused by the conversion of so many from spiritism/paganism to the Lordship of Christ.
  - 2. *Remember that coming to Christ means coming out of something else.*
  - 3. *Our entire worldview changes when we come to Christ.*
- B. On to Macedonia. 1-2
  - 1. Several months or a year in Macedonia, encouraging the churches.
    - a) With Philippian, Thessalonian, Berean churches, and probably traveling into Illyricum. (Rom.15:19)
  - 2. **Wrote 2 Cor. 1:8-12; 2:12-13**
  - 3. Spent Passover/Unleavened Bread in Philippi?
- C. Down to Greece (Corinth) for 3 months. 3.
  - 1. Wrote Romans during this time.
  - 2. Threat of being killed? Paul, already unpopular with his Jewish brethren, traveling with a ton of money to take back to Jerusalem, along with 10 mostly gentile brothers!
- D. Back through Macedonia (Philippi) and to Troas. 4-12
  - 1. Working with a team. Traveled with a group of 10., Sopater, Aristarchus, Secundus, Gaius, Timothy, Tychicus, Trophimus (Silas, Luke, Titus).
  - 2. An unplanned apostolic miracle. 7-12
    - a) These authenticated Paul's gospel.
- E. Down to Miletus. 13-16.
  - 1. Deliberately passed by Ephesus.
  - 2. *No time for a good thing? Perhaps. On the way to a better thing.*

#### IV. Gospel Advice on living forward into 2020.

##### A. Think missionally, but prioritize discipleship. Kingdom/Gospel life

1. Missional. Acts is about the spread of the gospel through the church into the world. Acts 1:8.
  - a) Our life has a purpose, to bear witness of Christ.
2. Discipleship. If we are not healthy disciples (apprentices) of Jesus, we will not be good missionaries. The Spirit nourishes discipleship in gatherings, prayer, communion, apostolic teaching (Acts 2:42, 18:23)
  - a) What did Paul preach and teach? Read Romans, Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, Galatians
3. Note: Life is a journey but it has a purpose and a destination.
  - a) We often hear that “life is a journey, not a destination.” *Really?* The first part of this trope is true, but the second part renders the sentiment nonsense.
  - b) A journey without a purpose or destination is just wandering around, lost...
4. *What is going on in my life that is forcing me to think more like the Lord and less like the world?*

##### B. Plan wisely, but live flexibly. 3, 16 (also 2 Cor.1-2)

1. Life comes at us. Paul did not have a map of the “3<sup>rd</sup> Journey”.
2. He had a long-term goal (getting the money to Jerusalem church), but short-term flexibility. Verse 16. “If Possible.”
  - a) Paul changed his plans on more than one occasion. (2 Cor.1)
3. He kept his long-term goal of Jerusalem, but flexed along the way.
  - a) Originally, he wanted Passover in Jerusalem, but changed plans and celebrated it in Macedonia on the way home.

##### C. Expect difficulty, but count on grace. 2Cor.12:7-10

1. Providence: His grace is sufficient for whatever he allows or brings into our lives. **Gen.45:5,8**
2. *How many good things have you been forced into by hard circumstances?*
3. *One of the hardest things in our culture is that we expect life to be easy and then are doubly depressed and shocked when it doesn't go our way.*

##### D. Seek guidance, but focus on service. 1-2 (Matt.20:25-28)

1. Paul sought guidance, but in the service of others. The Jerusalem church and the strength and encouragement of the other believers.
  - a) Doing whatever we do to benefit others is how we glorify the Lord. **Col.3:17, 23.**  
Whatever you do...to God's glory.
2. *Even though he himself struggled with discouragement and frustration more or less during this period of his life. 2 Cor.1-2*

V. *Our Lord lived exactly this way during his sojourn among us and teaches us to do the same. Trusting Him all the way. Matt.6:25-34*