

With Sister Paulette Morrison
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DISCOVERING THE POWER OF THE WORD

Reading and Listening Session
Based on Acts 20



This article explores the rich narrative of Acts 20 through selected verses (Acts 20:1-3, 6-10, 12, 15, 17-18, 20-23, 28, 31, 33-37 ESV). We'll delve into the plot, Paul's commitment to finishing his course, a poignant face-to-face meeting, a dramatic incident involving a student, and the undeniable presence of God at work throughout the story. By examining these key elements, we aim to highlight the power of reading and listening to the Word of God.

The Plot (Acts 20:3)

Acts 20:3 describes a plot against Paul by the Jews as he was about to set sail for Syria. This verse encapsulates the ongoing opposition Paul faced throughout his ministry. Despite these threats, Paul remained steadfast in his commitment to spreading the Gospel. This initial challenge sets the stage for the subsequent events and underscores the perilous context in which Paul operated.

Finishing the Course (Acts 20:22-27)

In Acts 20:22-27, Paul articulates his unwavering resolve to fulfill the ministry he received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. He is compelled by the Spirit to go to Jerusalem, not knowing what awaits him there, except that prison and hardships are inevitable. He declares that he does not count his own life of any value, only that he may finish his race and the ministry he received from the Lord Jesus. Paul emphasizes that he has not hesitated to proclaim the whole will of God. Paul's dedication serves as an example for all believers, highlighting the importance of faithfulness and perseverance in fulfilling God's calling.

Face to Face Meeting (Acts 20:17-38)

One of the most moving passages in Acts 20 is the farewell address Paul delivers to the elders of the church in Ephesus (Acts 20:17-38). Paul recounts his ministry among them, emphasizing his humility, dedication, and the tears he shed for them. He reminds them that he taught them publicly and from house to house, urging them to repent and believe in Jesus. He then warns them of future challenges and urges them to shepherd the church of God. The passage concludes with a heart-wrenching farewell, marked by weeping and embraces. The emotional depth of this meeting underscores the profound bonds of love and fellowship that characterized the early church.

Drops out of Paul’s Class (Acts 20:9)

Acts 20:9 recounts the story of Eutychus, a young man who fell asleep during Paul's long sermon and fell out of a third-story window. While seemingly a minor detail, this incident serves as a reminder of the importance of attentiveness and the potential consequences of distraction. More importantly, the raising of Eutychus from the dead highlights God's power and Paul's faith in that power.

God at Work (Acts 20:9-12)

The story of Eutychus (Acts 20:9-12) is not just a cautionary tale; it is a powerful demonstration of God's grace and intervention. After Eutychus falls and is presumed dead, Paul goes down, embraces him, and declares that his life is in him. Miraculously, Eutychus is restored to life. The account emphasizes that God is actively involved in the lives of believers, even in the midst of seemingly ordinary circumstances. The believers were greatly comforted. This miracle serves as a sign of God's presence and power, encouraging the believers to persevere in their faith.

Summary

Acts 20 weaves together themes of perseverance, faithfulness, love, and divine intervention. From the plot against Paul to the raising of Eutychus, the narrative illustrates the challenges and triumphs of the early church. The power of Acts 20 lies in its ability to inspire and challenge readers to embrace the whole will of God, to persevere in the face of adversity, and to trust in God's active involvement in their lives. The story emphasizes the importance of community, encouragement, and the transformative power of the Gospel. By reading and listening to the Word of God, we can gain insight into God's character, His will for our lives, and the hope that He offers to all who believe.