

CP— 2/18/24

Acts 20:1–6 – Paul’s Ministry in Macedonia and Greece

Sermon Outline

1. Paul’s Condition

- Paul faced pressures from the outside.
 - 2 Corinthians 1:8–9
 - “burdened beyond our strength” = Crushed/beyond the ability to endure
 - “despaired of life” = No passage/exit/absence of an exit all together
 - “received the sentence of death” = “No way out. We are going to die.”
 - 2 Corinthians 11:24–27
- Paul faced pressures from the inside (2 Corinthians 2:1–5; 7:5–7; 11:28)
- Paul was a human being not immune to pressures from inside or outside the church.
- Despair should lead us to the Father!
 - “Disappointment leads us to what will not disappoint.”
 - Despair produces dependence and hope.
 - Despair moves our eyes from the temporal to the eternal.
 - “An unbroken field produces no crop.”

2. Paul’s Concern

- Encouragement of the church in Macedonia
- Correction of the church in Corinth for God’s glory and their unity
 - Unity is both a gift and a duty.
 - Ephesians 4:1–6
 - Unity is worth fighting for!
- Collection for the church in Jerusalem (Romans 15:24–27)
 - This collection met a physical need.
 - It served as a graphic illustration of unity.
- “Encouragement is the oxygen of the soul.”
- We are all called to be encouragers.
- Hebrews 3:12–13

***** How can we serve the saints this week?**

- **Who needs your encouragement this week?**
- **Who do you need to check on this week?**
- **Who can you serve this week by taking care of a need?**

3. Paul’s Companions

- The churches understood that there was one Church.
- Paul’s fruitfulness was not just in converts but partners.
- The early church understood that they were called to join God in His Mission.

Paul's Chronology with Corinth

1. The church at Corinth is established in Acts 18.
2. While in Ephesus, Paul wrote a letter of instruction referred to "my letter." (1 Cor. 5:9). We do not have this letter.
3. Chloe's people reported problems (1 Cor. 1:11), and Paul also received a letter for help with issues from the church in Corinth (1 Cor. 7:1), and Paul wrote 1 Corinthians and delivered it by the hands of Timothy (possibly Acts 19:23 but probably earlier).
4. Timothy reported that the letter was unsuccessful, and the situation was worse.
 - stimulated further rebellion
 - caused an emergency trip to Corinth for Paul (2 Cor. 2:1; 12:14; 13:1-2)
 - This visit was a painful visit.
 - One member defied Paul's authority, and the church did not defend Paul.
5. Paul returned to Ephesus and wrote a third letter (2 Cor. 2:3-4,9; 7:8,12), which was delivered by Titus. We do not have this letter.
6. Titus took the letter to Corinth, and Paul was anxious about it. (2 Cor. 2:13; 7:5,13). Paul left Ephesus and stopped in Troas, hoping to find Titus. Even though he had an open door to preach the gospel, he did not stay and instead went to Macedonia to hopefully find Titus.
7. While in Macedonia, Paul found Titus and received good news. He then wrote 2 Corinthians.
8. Paul visited Corinth for the last time in Acts 20:2 and wrote Romans.

Small Group Discussion

1. How did the Holy Spirit speak to you in the Bible passage and sermon Sunday?
What stood out to you? What questions do you have?
2. What was Paul's condition spiritually, emotionally, and physically when he arrived in Macedonia? What were the sources of his condition? How does God use despair for His glory and our good? Give testimony.
3. What were Paul's concerns in Acts 20:1-6? What can we learn from him, and how can we apply it to our lives this week? What were the three questions Pastor Justin asked in how we can serve the saints this week? Pray for God's guidance in answering those questions.
4. Knowing Paul's condition in Acts 20, what can we learn by how he continues to serve God and His people even in this condition?
5. What do we learn about the early church from the list of Paul's companions in 20:4?