**PP** **Acts: To the End of the Earth**

**Part 55-Acts 20:1-12 *Being the Encouraging Church* 10/29-30/2022**

For just a moment, can you think of a time when someone really encouraged you?

I’ve been tremendously encouraged by many of you and it has a profound impact in my life!

I can think all the way back to 11th grade and remember an incredibly significant encouragement

Our regular English teacher was out on maternity leave, and Ed Lawless was hired in her place

He continually encouraged me, and I will never forget asking him to sign my yearbook, and he

wrote that he believed I was gifted in writing and encouraged me to cultivate that gift

He probably thought nothing of it, but I read that little sentence dozens of times, soaking it in

I asked you to think of a time when someone encouraged you, but now I would ask you to think

of a time when you intentionally, meaningfully encouraged someone else

We love to be around encouragers and this was what the Apostle Paul yearned to do

Let’s keep that in mind as the Apostle Paul wraps up his third and final missionary journey

**PP** **1-Encouragers *live life toward others***

***“After the uproar ceased, Paul sent for the disciples, and after encouraging them, he said***

***farewell and departed for Macedonia. When he had gone through those regions and***

***had given them much encouragement, he came to Greece.”* 20:1-2**

There is such a thing as the spiritual gift of encouragement, which is the God’s supernatural

empowerment of certain Christians to live a life of constant encouraging of others

You feel better after being around these people, your spirit is uplifted, and some of you here have

this gift, but not everyone does, yet we are all to encourage one another

**PP *‘Encouraging’*** in the Greek is *parakaléō* a verb meaning to *call someone alongside*

The initiator can be the helper or the one in need, and in the bible the word is used in a variety

of ways like exhorting, praying, comforting, encouraging, admonishing, etc

Parakaleo was used by sailors when their ship broke down at sea, and they raised a flag

summoning another ship to help which would tie up and make repair or tow to a harbor

Captains would go among his soldiers ***‘encouraging’*** his troops before a coming battle

Today, we might call someone who is hurting and listen and pray for that person, *parakaleo*

To be in grief and ask someone to be a listening ear is parakaleo

To come alongside someone in sin and exhort them to repent is parakaleo

To cry out to God for help is parakaleo

When a little child cries out in the night and that parent rushes in to comfort is parakaleo

It cannot be done in a relational vacuum of private living where you don’t intimately interact

with others

In fact, **PP** these are the two ingredients of encouragement that we need to learn: Strengthen each

other, and call forth greater and renewed commitments to Christ[[1]](#footnote-0)

So here in **Acts 20**, Paul is calling these Christians to his side to strengthen and call for their

renewed commitment to Christ

So our two questions come back to us: Can you recall anyone doing that for you specifically and

Can you recall doing that for someone else?

Paul shows us that encouraging others means we live *toward* people and if we can learn to live

this way, the impact will be great as we will see at the end of this passage

**PP** **2-Encouragers *live life with others***

Do you remember when we looked at **Acts 17** that Paul left Berea hurriedly and by himself

because of the opposition growing there?

And that he went to Athens by himself, and from there to Corinth by himself?

What we saw that by the time he arrived at Corinth, he was at a low place of discouragement

Nearly always Paul was with a team and it’s one of my favorite lessons from our passage

**Acts 20** opens with Paul traveling to various Gentile churches taking up an offering to help

the poor Jewish believers in the church at Jerusalem and he is intent on taking it himself

He originally wanted to arrive in Jerusalem by the Passover, which is the first day of the Feast of

Unleavened Bread and he was taking a team of representatives from these churches with

him, for security reasons as well as introduction reasons

There was ***‘Sopater the Berean’*** the bible student; ***‘Aristarchus’*** whose name indicates he was

the best of the best, an elite of Thessalonica

He was accompanied by another Thessalonian, ***‘Secundus’*** whose name means *second*

In Greek households, the slave in charge of all other slaves was called *Primus*, and his

understudy, who carried out his duties was called *Secundus*

We have one accustomed to ruling it seems, another who served, along with a biblical scholar

Add in ***‘Gaius’*** and ***‘Timothy’*** and ***‘Tychicus and Trophimus’*** along with Luke and possibly

Titus, you have group of 9 or 10 people that Paul had gathered with him

And he had profoundly impacted each of their lives as he lived together with them

Friends, for us to live in a way defined by *parakaleo*, we live toward and with others

**PP 3-Encouragers *live life for others***

So far, this could be a Ted talk, so what brings encouragement to a unique level in the church?

For those of you who live lives of encouragement, you need to know how influential you are,

and Paul is about to show you this

In **20:6**, we learn that Paul and Luke sailed from Philippi, where Luke had been for 7 years, to

Troas, and they went there ***‘after the days of Unleavened Bread’***

The year was AD 57, and in that year, this festival took place April 7th-14th

Paul intends to arrive with his team in Jerusalem by the Day of Pentecost, 50 days after Passover

Yet it seems he knew he would never be back in this area again, and he wanted to encourage

these churches one final time slo the church at Troas he and Luke

***“On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked***

***with them, intending to depart on the next day, and he prolonged his speech until***

***midnight.”***

The Jewish people celebrated the Sabbath on Saturdays, but the early church by this time began

to meet on the first day of the week, Sundays, the day Jesus was resurrected

People all over the Roman Empire worked on Sundays, so the church gathered after work to sing

and teach and eat a meal and the Lord’s Supper, starting likely around 7 pm

They are on the third floor, the upper room, and ***‘a young man named Eutychus, sitting at the***

***window, sank into a deep sleep as Paul talked still longer.’* 20:9**

Paul was teaching for hours, it was warm, flickering, smoking lamps, and Eutychus, who is a

***‘youth’*** of 8 to 14 years old, fell not only asleep, but fell out a window to his death

It’s ironic that the name ***‘Eutychus’*** means *lucky* or *fortunate*

Remember that Luke the doctor had rejoined Paul and was there to pronounce the boy dead

Paul went down and outside and took him in his arms, and declared to all, ***‘Do not be alarmed,***

***for his life is in him’*** (**10**), meaning he had been raised from the dead

What happened next shows us the influence encouragers have on the whole church

The church goes back up, and they celebrate the Lord’s Supper, ***“And when Paul had gone up***

***and had broken bread and eaten”* 20:11**

Breaking bread refers to eating a meal or the Lord’s Supper, and here almost certainly the latter

Paul had just celebrated the Feast of Unleavened Bread (**20:6**) which began with the Day of

Passover followed by 7 days that the Jews called a *Feast of Sanctification*

In the way that all leaven was to be swept out of their homes during this Festival, similarly sin

and impurity was to be confessed and swept out of their hearts as well

The Lord’s Supper is a time when we need to examine our hearts, see what is impure in them,

and sweep it out through confession and repentance

Having just witnessed a miracle in Eutychus, Paul leads them to observe an even greater miracle,

the death of Jesus Christ and the Heavenly Father raising Him back to life

The Lord’s Supper is an ordinance of grace that stirs us to greater commitment to Jesus

Recall what the meaning of biblical encouragement is

**PP** The two ingredients of encouragement are: Strengthen each other, and Call forth greater and

renewed commitments to Christ

When God displays Himself in powerfully wonderful ways, an encourager speaks that to the one

who received His kindness with the expected result to increase that person’s trust in God

Notice what Paul did right after the Lord’s Supper: ***‘he conversed with them a long while, until***

***daybreak, and so departed.’***

He conversed and taught from God’s Word even longer, but notice the effect on the church

***‘And they took the youth away alive, and were not a little comforted.’* 20:12**

Here is the third use of *parakaleo* in the word ***‘comforted’***

The power of God in raising Eutychus from the dead and Paul’s teaching had encouraged them

all, strengthening their faith and commitment in and to Jesus Christ

**PP** Encouragers live *toward*, *with* and *for* people, helping to strengthen and renew a commitment

to trust in and lovingly serve our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

So, **PP *“Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to***

***meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more***

***as you see the Day drawing near.”* Hebrews 10:24-25**

And watch the chain reaction that happens when we do: **PP *“Blessed be the God and Father of***

***our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort* (parakaléō)*, Who***

***comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any***

***affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God”***

**2 Corinthians 1:3-4**

Pray

1. Expository Dictionary of Bible Words, Lawrence O. Richards [↑](#footnote-ref-0)