

GROWTH + GROUPS

NAVIGATE LIFE TOGETHER

Maranatha Chapel Sermon Based Study Guide SB 07.25.2021

WHAT FRIENDS ARE FOR – Acts 20:1-12

Receiving the Message and Relating to the Study

What insights, principles, or observations stood out to you from this week's message? Discuss with your group.

"I do not expect to visit this country again." Dwight L. Moody made that statement shortly after arriving in England in March, 1867. He had experienced rough waters and was so seasick during the voyage from America that he decided he would never sail again. But he made five more visits to England, seasickness notwithstanding. In the same way, Paul was determined to finish the course with joy, no matter what the cost might be (Acts 20:24). The Gospel had stirred the waters, yet even before the silversmiths' riot, Paul had purposed in the Spirit to leave Ephesus and go to Jerusalem (see 19:21). Along the way, he wanted to make at least one more visit to the churches the Lord had helped him found. His main purpose was to encourage and strengthen the saints so that they might stand true to the Lord and be effective witnesses during times of extreme turmoil. "The care of all the churches" was Paul's greatest joy as well as his heaviest burden (2 Cor. 11:23-28). Let's get into our study...

1. What stood out to you during this week's study?
2. Have you ever been sea sick, car sick, or had motion sickness? If so, how hard was it for you to complete the journey?
3. Describe a time you were determined to finish the course with joy, no matter what the cost might be.

Digging Deeper in God's Word: Life Lessons

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 20:1-6

As Paul was about to sail for Syria from Corinth, presumably to visit Antioch (and then Jerusalem), he learned of a Jewish plot against him (20:3). To avoid the plotters, Paul decided not to leave by sea from Corinth, but to backtrack through Macedonia. Paul was not going to Jerusalem alone. He was in the company of representatives of the churches that had given money for Jerusalem; they were going to accompany Paul with the gift (20:4). When Paul is mentioned in scripture, he is almost always accompanied by other believers. He wanted, needed, and sought out the company of Christian leaders.

1. As Paul set out again to visit the churches, he intended to strengthen the believers' faith and collect money for the impoverished Jewish Christians in Jerusalem. What problems did he encounter in carrying out that plan?
2. Paul faced many challenges, yet was determined to finish the mission. Persecution becomes, under the Lord's power, a catalyst for explosive growth. How might Christians today leverage challenging times to speak the truth about Jesus?
3. What kept Paul going, even to the point of dying if need be? (Philippians 3:14)
4. Paul was not traveling alone. He was accompanied by other believers. What good examples do you see here for the way churches should function and the way believers should treat and feel about each other?
5. Paul loved these believers who accompanied him. He poured into their lives always. He encouraged them no matter what they were facing. He essentially, like a spiritual mother or father, provided unconditional love. How might Christians today mimic these actions? (2 Thessalonians 2:6-12) (Appendix "One Another's")

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 20:7-12

The Disciples gathered on the first day (Sunday) of the week. This meeting in Troas is often taken as the earliest evidence of the day and time when Christians gathered for their worship service. Paul had been speaking a very long time—until midnight—and then he continued to "talk on and on" (20:9, NIV). Besides the length of Paul's talk, the fumes of the lamps and the crush of the crowd made breathing a bit difficult. It was quite late, and young Eutychus began to nod off. Finally, the

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drowsy Eutychus fell sound asleep and tumbled to the ground from the third-story window. Paul then “threw himself on the young man and put his arms around him” (20:10). He told the disciples not to be alarmed, and that, “He’s alive!” (20:10).

6. The disciples gathered on the first day (Sunday). Why did the Christian believers gather on Sunday instead of Saturday (the Jewish Sabbath)? Which day should we worship the Lord? (Romans 14:5)
7. The Word of God was always declared at Christian assemblies (1 Timothy 4:13). Knowing this would probably be Paul’s last meeting with the saints at Toras, he preached a long sermon. It’s doubtful that anyone complained. From the account of the church services in Toras, what can we learn about Christian gatherings at that time? (2 Timothy 4:2)
8. Paul interrupted his sermon to rush downstairs to bring Eutychus back to life again. His approach reminds us of Elijah (1 Kings 17:21-22 and Elisha (2 Kings 4:34-35). God’s power was present to work for His people. Describe a healing miracle you may have experienced or witnessed.
9. God does still perform miracles. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8). The greatest miracle of all is the conversion of a blind sinner to see their sin and to change the human heart; from one of serving the god of this world to seeing their own sin and the need of a Savior in Jesus Christ. Describe how the eternal miracle of Jesus (John 3:16) is considered greater than an earthly healing miracle? Why do some receive earthly healing miracles while others do not? (Isaiah 55:8-9)

Applying God’s Word

What did you learn from this study and how does this personally speak to you? Discuss with your group.

When we think of Paul, we think of a super saint. But Paul was just like everyone else, and like the rest of us, he was prone to discouragement and fear. He went through many afflictions and trials, yet he was conscious of God’s comforting presence. God comforted Paul so that he in turn might be able to comfort others with the very same comfort with which he was comforted by God (2 Corinthians 1:4). The word “comfort” usually means consolation in times of sorrow; however, in the New Testament, it has a wider meaning. It refers to the encouragement and exhortation that comes to us from one who is beside us in time of need. We are not comforted to be comfortable, but to be comforters.

1. Paul was conscious of God’s comforting presence. In the same way, scripture says David strengthened himself (encouraged his heart) in the Lord (1 Samuel 30:6). He did this through worship. Worship is a disciplined act of the will; not something to be engaged in only when we feel like it. Are there areas in your life where you need the comforting presence of the Lord? How might you make it a point to worship God during this time of affliction?
2. Think of a time when you were comforted by the presence of God. How might you use this same comfort to encourage and give exhortation to someone facing the same time of affliction?

PRAYER

Lord, we worship Your holy name. Thank you for those believers you have put in our life. Let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another. Let us comfort with the comfort we have received from you. May the Holy Spirit fill us with the love, joy, and peace that is only found in You. Amen.

“Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God (2 Corinthians 1:4)

Appendix: The “One Another” Passages

- Love one another (John 13:34)

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- Be devoted to one another (Romans 12:10)
- Honor one another above yourselves (Romans 12:10)
- Live in harmony with one another (Romans 12:16)
- Build up one another (Romans 14:19; 1 Thessalonians 5:11)
- Be likeminded towards one another (Romans 15:5)
- Accept one another (Romans 15:7)
- Admonish one another (Romans 15:14; Colossians 3:16)
- Greet one another (Romans 16:16)
- Care for one another (1 Corinthians 12:25)
- Serve one another (Galatians 5:13)
- Bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2)
- Forgive one another (Ephesians 4:2, 32; Colossians 3:13)
- Be patient with one another (Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 3:13)
- Speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15, 25)
- Be kind and compassionate to one another (Ephesians 4:32)
- Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs (Ephesians 5:19)
- Submit to one another (Ephesians 5:21, 1 Peter 5:5)
- Consider others better than yourselves (Philippians 2:3)
- Look to the interests of one another (Philippians 2:4)
- Bear with one another (Colossians 3:13)
- Teach one another (Colossians 3:16)
- Comfort one another (1 Thessalonians 4:18)
- Encourage one another (1 Thessalonians 5:11)
- Exhort one another (Hebrews 3:13)
- Stir up [provoke, stimulate] one another to love and good works (Hebrews 10:24)
- Show hospitality to one another (1 Peter 4:9)
- Employ the gifts that God has given us for the benefit of one another (1 Peter 4:10)
- Clothe yourselves with humility towards one another (1 Peter 5:5)
- Pray for one another (James 5:16)
- Confess your faults to one another (James 5:16)