

The Heart of Paul

Text: Acts 20:19, 31; I Corinthians 13:1-13

After the riot in Ephesus, Paul and company went to Macedonia, then Greece proper, then back around to Philippi. This is in the midst of Paul's third missionary journey. Paul was a man on a mission. The heart of Paul is truly revealed on this part of his trek. We observe first of all...

I. PAUL'S HEART FOR JERUSALEM AND HIS KINSMEN

Acts 20:16, 22, 23; Acts 21:13; Romans 9:1-3; Romans 10:1

When our heart is open to the Lord's heart, we begin to feel what the Lord Jesus felt--and still experiences, even in Heaven. Hebrews 7:25: "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." Luke 13:34: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!" Matthew says it like this in Matthew 23:37: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" The word "brood," comes to us from our word "breed." One of the definitions is "all of the children in a family." In the context, our Lord uses the term comparing Himself to a mother hen who would protect her brood by lifting in loving welcome her wings, that would in turn enclosed about the chicks with protecting compassion. Psalm 17:8: "Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings." Psalm 57:1: "Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast." The heart of Paul is very much akin to the heart of Jesus. When our hearts are in tune with our Lord's we will have a burden for our family members. I am reminded of the old song, "Will the Circle Be Unbroken?" Some of the words are: "There are loved ones in the glory whose dear forms you often miss. When you close your earthly story, will you join them in their bliss? Will the circle be unbroken by and by, by and by? You remember songs of heaven which you sang with childish voice. Do you love the hymns they taught you, or are songs of earth your choice? Will the circle be unbroken by and by, by and by?"

II. PAUL'S HEART FOR CORINTH AND THE GENTILES

II Corinthians 2:4-11; Acts 20:6a: "And we sailed away from Philippi...." But before he sailed away from Philippi, Paul wrote II Corinthians. Paul desired the Corinth church (who were commanded to take discipline upon a man who had grossly sinned) to now forgive this repentant man. Paul went so far to say that to hold him in unforgiveness would place him into Satan's snare (II Corinthians 2:10, 11). In this letter Paul reveals that he was taking the collection for the poor Jewish brethren from the predominantly Gentile churches in Macedonia (II Corinthians 8:1-5). Our Savior, Paul explains, best exemplifies this spirit of giving. II Corinthians 8:9: "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."

III. PAUL'S HEART FOR THE GOSPEL AND DISCIPLESHIP

A. A Pattern of Sunday Worship

Acts 20: 7a; Hebrews 10:25: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."

B. The Primacy of Preaching

Acts 20:7b-12, 21; Romans 1:16. Paul preached in Troas until midnight. A young man named Eutychus had perched himself in the window, fell asleep while Paul was preaching and fell to his death. Paul through the power of the Living Christ raised the young man back to life. Then Paul took a break to eat (Acts 20:11), then kept teaching and preaching until daybreak.

C. The Call to Faithfulness

Acts 20:18b: "...Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons." II Timothy 4:2: "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." I Corinthians 4:2: "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."

D. The Example of Humility

Acts 20:19a: "Serving the Lord with all humility of mind...." Romans 12:10: "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another." I Timothy 5:21: "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality."

James 4:10: "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up."

E. The Call for The Entirety of the Biblical Message

Acts 20:20, 26, 27

IV. PAUL'S HEART FOR THE MESSAGE AND THE MESSENGER

Acts 20:17: "And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church."

A. The Messenger Must Be Unmovable.

Acts 20:24a: "But none of these things move me...."

I Corinthians 15:58: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

B. The Messenger Must Die to Self.

Acts 20: 24b: "...neither count I my life dear unto myself...."

I Corinthians 15:31b: "...I die daily."

C. The Messenger Must Keep the Finish in Mind.

I Corinthians 20: 24c: "...so that I might finish my course with joy...."

II Timothy 4:7: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."

D. The Message Must Never Change.

Acts 20: 24d: "...and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." Galatians 1:11,12: "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." I Thessalonians 2:13: "For this cause

also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.”

III. PAUL’S HEART IN THE SWEET SORROW OF PARTING

ACTS 20:25, 38

Paul would not be seeing many of these people in Ephesus again and therefore he wanted to leave an indelible reminder, even through tears, how much they are loved. In Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*, Act 2, Scene 2, Juliet is bidding her love (Romeo) goodnight from the balcony and says, “Parting is such sweet sorrow, that I shall say good night till it be morrow.” It is sorrowful because on this side of eternity, Paul and his converts will not see each other again, but they know they shall see each other again on the other side! Therefore:

A. Rejoice in the fact that the Church is the Lord’s

Acts 20:28

B. Be Watchful of the Wolves.

Acts 20:29-31

C. Rejoice in That You Have Something Better Than Paul.

Acts 20:32

D. Remember the Ways of Christ.

Acts 20:33-35

E. Prayerfulness Brings Sweetness From the Sorrow.

Acts 20:36-38

-Pastor Pope-