

The Way

Growth of the Church

Lesson 14: Paul's Third Missionary Journey – Troas to Jerusalem

We are indebted to Ethnos360 for providing the basis of these lessons

Review (Where We've Been)

The "Over Time" Spread of the Gospel...

- **34AD** Saul Converted/Commissioned to Take the Gospel to Gentiles (Acts 9)
- **48AD** Paul's First Missionary Journey (Acts 13-14) – *about 1 ½ years*
- **49-51AD** Paul's Second Missionary Journey (Acts 15-18) – *about 2 ½ years*
- **52-57AD** Paul's Third Missionary Journey (Acts 18-21) – *about 5 years*

So far, Paul has gone to Ephesus, Macedonia, Greece (Corinth), and Troas



BIG Idea

You'll remember that Paul briefly visited Ephesus on his 2nd missionary journey.

He returned to Ephesus on his 3rd journey staying for 2+years, where a great number of people believed on Jesus.

After the silversmiths in Ephesus incited a riot against Paul, he left the city and continued his missionary journey.

At the close of this 3rd missionary journey, Paul wanted to meet with the Ephesian church elders again, but he did not have the time to go to Ephesus.

Acts 20:16 (ESV) For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he might not have to spend time in Asia, for he was hastening to be at Jerusalem.

We will clearly see Paul's desire to "birth" churches that remain strong, so he appointed pastors (elders) who would teach, guide, warn, and encourage the church. This is also the work of today's church. We're called to plant churches and walk alongside them so that the leaders teach, guide, warn, and encourage the church.

Information (What You Need to Know)

Paul's Care for the Ephesian Church...

▪ **Paul calls for the Ephesian pastors (elders) to come visit him in Miletus**

Acts 20:17 (ESV) Now from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church to come to him..

✓ These elders were likely appointed by Paul during his 2-year stay

- What type of men were they?

1 Timothy 3:1 (NLT) This is a trustworthy saying: "If someone aspires to be a church leader, he desires an honorable position." **2** So a church leader must be a man whose life is above reproach. He must be faithful to his wife. He must exercise self-control, live wisely, and have a good reputation. He must enjoy having guests in his home, and he must be able to teach. **3** He must not be a heavy drinker or be violent. He must be gentle, not quarrelsome, and not love money. **4** He must manage his own family well, having children who respect and obey him. **5** For if a man cannot manage his own household, how can he take care of God's church? **6** A church leader must not be a new believer, because he might become proud, and the devil would cause him to fall. **7** Also, people outside the church must speak well of him so that he will not be disgraced and fall into the devil's trap.

✓ What were their responsibilities?

Acts 20:27 (ESV) "...for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God. **28** Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood."

What's included in preaching the whole counsel of God? (D.A. Carson)

- God's purposes in the history of redemption (*truths* to be believed and a *God* to be worshiped)
- Unpacking human origin, fall, redemption, and destiny (a *worldview* that shapes human understanding and a *Savior* without whom there is no hope)
- Conduct expected of God's people (*commandments* to be obeyed and *wisdom* to be pursued, both individually and in the church)
- God's promises of transforming power both in this life and in the life to come (*promises* to be trusted and *hope* to be anticipated)

▪ **Paul reminded the elders of his own life and ministry in Ephesus**

✓ **How he acted**

Acts 20:18 (ESV) "You yourselves know how I lived among you... **19** serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials..."

✓ **What he taught**

Acts 20:20 (ESV) “...how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house, **21** testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.”

✓ **What he would face in the future**

Acts 20:22 (ESV) “And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there, **23** except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me. **24** But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. **25** And now, behold, I know that none of you among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom will see my face again.”

■ **Paul was revealing that it was their turn to lead others as he had led them**

Acts 20:29 (ESV) “I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; **30** and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. **31** Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears. **32** And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.”

✓ Watch out for those teaching contrary to what he had taught them. There would be those who would try to lead others astray (vv.29-30)

✓ Continue to build up and edify the church (v.31)

✓ Cling to the Lord’s ability to sustain and mature them through His word (v.32)
The Bible is the source of spiritual growth for Christians. The church upholds the truth of the Scriptures, and leaders MUST be fully committed to that truth.

■ **Paul realized that “goodbyes” are necessary in church planting**

Acts 20:36 (ESV) And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. **37** And there was much weeping on the part of all; they embraced Paul and kissed him, **38** being sorrowful most of all because of the word he had spoken, that they would not see his face again. And they accompanied him to the ship.

“An often-overlooked cost of church planting is the pain of goodbyes. The sense of loss over a good thing is truly a good thing.” – Steve Timmis

Application (What You Need To Do):

Paul ends his 3rd missionary journey in Jerusalem.

Acts 21:17 (ESV) When we had come to Jerusalem, the brothers received us gladly.

What can we learn from Paul's missionary journeys?

- Faith and baptism are the first steps in people's faith journey
- The gospel is rooted in the Old Testament Scriptures
- Audience determines our *approach* but *not our message*
- We are responsible to speak the message, but the Spirit is responsible for bringing people to faith and repentance
- Although the church has experienced rejection and persecution throughout history, it must not deter us from making sure the Gospel spreads locally and globally