

I. DISCIPLES WHICH PAUL FINDS

- A. Paul leaves the pastors of Ephesus (Chapter 20)
 - 1. What a time they had in fellowship – a church Paul loved
 - a. A church Paul served and won and taught
 - b. A church Paul had dedicated MUCH time to disciple
 - c. A church that Paul loved dearly and loved him dearly
 - d. So much so that they came 30 miles to see him one last time
 - 2. EPH. 1:16 – “Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;”
 - 3. It was a PRAYER meeting and a tearful goodbye
 - a. They knelt and prayed together – ACTS 20:36
 - b. They wept SORE – ACTS 20:37
 - c. This was excellent Christian fellowship
- B. Paul seeks Christian fellowship AGAIN! ACTS 21:4
 - 1. This is no small thing – we NEED IT
 - a. PROV. 27:17 – “Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.”
 - b. HEB. 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.”
 - c. We need EXHORTATION!
 - 2. EXHORT (WEBSTERS 1828) – “To incite by words or advice; to animate or urge by arguments to a good deed or to any laudable conduct or course of action.”
 - a. To animate and to urge to LAUDABLE conduct
 - b. Laud simple means COMMENDABLE – “way to go!”
 - c. Wait! So, you came to church today! WAY TO GO!
 - d. That’s not small or meaningless!
 - i. Let’s make a BIG deal about it!
 - ii. Let’s show up! Ever see a team forfeit a game?
 - iii. But then that last player comes running in...
 - iv. Play ball!
 - 3. I HOPE you tell someone WAY TO GO this morning!
 - a. What a blessing to see you today!
 - b. Thank you for being here today
 - c. You’ve ENCOURAGED me today
 - d. I’ll see you back tonight at EVENING SERVICES!
 - e. Looking forward to Wednesday SERVICES!
- C. Paul went to different city and found a new group of disciples
 - 1. He didn’t expect them to find him...

- a. “Well... I’ve not met any Christians since I moved here...”
 - b. Don’t have sixth sense (I feel that new Christian has moved in...)”)
- 2. PROV. 18:24 – “A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.”
 - a. OBVIOUSLY, there’s two side to that! Some people aren’t friendly
 - b. Don’t let them steal your joy – go ahead and be friendly to them!
 - c. It messes with their minds... (AND secretly they’ll love you for it)
- 3. A good church is a CRITICAL factor in a decision to move!
 - a. I’ve had many job offers, but ALL of them have been filtered through the lens of where my family might go to church
 - b. My relationship with God is my first priority
 - i. Then my wife, then my kids, after that (now) this church
 - ii. Career falls pretty far down that list.
 - c. We keep tithing and giving to missions and GOD takes care of us
 - d. PLEASE DON’T allow yourself to separate from godly fellowship

II. DISCOURAGEMENT THAT PAUL FACES

- A. Paul stayed SEVEN days with these brothers and sisters in Christ
 - 1. Then stayed one day with brethren at Ptolemais
 - 2. He made the most of his time (SOAKED IT IN)
 - a. Stick around and fellowship after church / show up early and talk
 - b. Church is the best time of the week
 - c. That’s when I see my extended family and my closest friends
 - 3. And they take him on his journey (vs. 5 & 6)
 - a. They walked him to the car – ever have that happen
 - b. You say your goodbyes on the couch, then at the front door, then again in the driveway, then again with the motor running...
 - c. It’s HARD to part company with a dear brother
 - 4. Jesus had ministered in this area
 - a. MATT. 11:21 – “Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.”
 - b. But there were SOME that obeyed the Gospel and were saved!
 - c. Fellowship might be sparser but only means more precious!
- B. Some heard a word from God
 - 1. God is warning Paul in this passage of things to come (vs. 4)
 - a. The Bible says it was through the SPIRIT
 - b. So, we must understand that this message came from God
 - c. But the question is – did Paul disobey?
 - 2. We sometimes forget that Paul and the other Apostles were not perfect
 - a. Peter dissembled himself from the Gentiles
 - b. Thomas doubted the resurrection of Jesus Christ

- c. Paul himself discarded John Mark and separated from Barnabas
- 3. It's possible (and it happens again) but there's a more likely answer!

III. DAUGHTERS IN PHILIP'S FELLOWSHIP

- A. Philip – one of my favorite characters from the Book of Acts
 - 1. Called the “Evangelist” – What an EXCEPTIONAL title to be given by God!
 - a. A man that went preaching the Gospel wherever he was called
 - b. It was no big thing for him to be moved of the Spirit of God
 - c. He preached a great revival and then God took him to the desert
 - 2. He was one of the Seven Deacons – ACTS 6:1-7
 - a. And he never quit on God – STILL in ministry 27 years later!
 - b. God even uses Paul to mention his role in the letter to the church at Ephesus in EPH. 4:11 – “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;”
 - c. We might not all be pastors, but we are all to be TEACHERS
 - d. We can all EVANGELIZE
 - 3. And now Philip had raised his CHILDREN in the Gospel
 - a. Now it's important to know the word “prophesy” is used here
 - b. It is a “forth telling” of the Truth
 - i. We often only think of it as “foretelling”
 - ii. But from God's perspective it is one and the same
 - iii. If I tell you about the Cross, I am FORTH-telling
 - iv. If I tell you about the RAPTURE, I am FORETELLING!
 - c. They were WITNESSES of the GOSPEL
 - d. They were out winning souls, just like their father did
 - e. PROV. 11:30 – “The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.”
- B. Remember how God used Philip?
 - 1. He preaches a great meeting in the city of Samaria ACTS 8:4-8
 - a. God MOVES him to the desert ACTS 8:26
 - b. God REMOVES Philip elsewhere ACTS 8:39-40
 - c. Isn't it interesting WHERE God took him? Caesarea!
 - 2. Paul had been to Caesarea before ACTS 9:30 (he no doubt PREACHED)
 - 3. But think of the groundwork already laid for Philip
 - a. There was a CENTURION there that called for Peter ACTS 10:1
 - b. He called for Peter (because God told him to do so – vs. 5)
 - c. And Cornelius had called ALL his friends together (vs. 27)
 - d. Many were saved there – GOD HAD PREPARED for Philip arrive!
- C. So as Philip preaches up the coast, God causes him to organize a church there
 - 1. All the raw materials for a church were already provided (vs. 48)
 - 2. And Philips daughters were EXCITED about the ministry of the Gospel!

IV. DANGERS OF PARTIAL FACTS

- A. Another prophet shows up from Judea named Agabus (ACTS 21:10)
 - 1. He uses Paul's girdle to demonstrate the dangers of going to Jerusalem
 - 2. Paul WOULD be taken by the Jews and imprisoned by the Romans
 - 3. This was all TRUE – just like the Christians earlier at Tyre
- B. Some commentaries say Paul missed the will of God
 - 1. I don't think so – I think God was testing Paul's faith
 - 2. When people disobey God in the Bible, God often stops using them
 - a. Think about Noah after he got drunk
 - b. Think about King Saul after he kept the best of the spoil
 - c. It is all about their heart and willingness to be humble
 - d. David failed but he repented, and God kept using him
 - 3. These people had the FACTS but made the wrong conclusion!
- C. God had GIVEN them the truth, but they used fleshly / worldly wisdom
 - 1. How can it glorify God if Paul is put into prison?
 - a. From the human perspective, it can't – we would agree
 - b. But God used Paul MIGHTILY from prison
 - c. Books of Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon
 - d. He will PREACH before Governors, kings, and even Caesar
 - 2. The Word of God often goes against our human understanding
 - a. Ask any missionary – or their parents (with grandchildren)
 - b. Think about Salvation itself
 - i. Every religion in the world talks about Good Works
 - ii. Do these things. Don't do those things.
 - iii. That CANNOT save ANYONE
 - c. ISA. 64:6 – “But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.”
 - 3. Our flesh wants to work our way to Heaven
 - a. We know there's a Heaven to gain and a Hell to shun
 - b. The Bible tells us. The Holy Spirit confirms it in our hearts!
 - c. We have the facts, but many come to the WRONG CONCLUSION!

V. DISCOVER A PERSONAL FAITH

- A. You cannot work your way to Heaven (baptism, good works, none of that Saves)
 - 1. The Bible TEACHES that in no uncertain terms: EPH. 2:8-9 – “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: (9) Not of works, lest any man should boast.”
 - 2. He did it all! He cried from the Cross: “IT IS FINISHED”
- B. There is nothing that can be added or taken away – the work is complete
- C. We must merely BELIEVE and be Saved (Knowledge, Repentance, Faith)
- D. Be Saved Today!