

Acts: Fond Farewells

(Acts 20:13-38)

Gathering Together (v. 13-17)

- Paul and company sail from Troas to Miletus, making several stops along the way
- Each leg of the journey represented one daylight period, with the crew putting into port each night
 - This was due to the rocky coasts, making night sailing dangerous
- Paul sends for the elders from the Ephesian church to meet him in Miletus, about 30 miles south of the city

Recalling the Past (v. 18-21)

- Once the Ephesian elders arrive, Paul speaks to them at length
 - It is his farewell address to these brothers in Christ
- He begins by focusing on his ministry history with them
- He reflects on the three characteristics of his ministry, which he claims should be emulated:
 - Humility (Phil 2:3; Col 3:12; Eph 4:2)
 - Openness of his proclamation
 - He held nothing about the Gospel back
 - Inclusiveness of his witness
 - He shared the Gospel with anyone willing to listen

Facing the Future (v. 22-27)

- Paul then looks forward to what is ahead of him
 - He knows that God is sending him to Jerusalem and that hardships are ahead
- Paul's focuses on finishing his ministry & life well
 - "Finishing the race": The goal being witnessing to the truth of who Jesus is to very end
 - Which he would do
- He then clearly states that he knows this is the last time he will see these dear brothers on this side of eternity

Words of Instruction (v. 28-35)

- Paul gives the Ephesians elders words of both encouragement & warning
- They are to take their roles as shepherds of God's people seriously
 - Starting with their own lives
- And warns them of false teachers that will rise up
 - Some from their own midst
- He finishes with a reflection on material goods
 - Again, pointing to his personal example
 - He encourages his brothers to be known for what they give, not what they take
 - A characteristic that he states is essential for Christian leaders (1 Tim 3:3, 8; Tts 1:7, 11)
 - And he quotes Jesus Himself as evidence: "It is more blessed to give than to receive."
 - Though we do not have this expression verbatim elsewhere, it is reflected in Jesus' teachings, especially in Luke's Gospel (Luke 6:30, 38; 11:41; 12:33; 18:22)

Parting Ways (v. 36-38)

- After Paul finished speaking, he embraced his brothers and wept with them
 - A reflection of their deep love for one another
- Then he got back on the boat to finish his voyage to Jerusalem

So What?

- Are we known for our humility, openness, and inclusion with the Gospel?

Meditation Verse: *Philippians 2:3*