

Pastor Jeremy M. Thomas
Fredericksburg Bible Church
107 East Austin
Fredericksburg, Texas 78624
830-997-8834 jthomas@fbgbible.org

A0930 – July 26, 2009 – Acts 20:1-6 – Asleep In Bible Class

Now, last week we saw how Paul changed the society and culture of all Asia. I mentioned it was not by legislation and petition signing. Now, I'm not saying you can't or shouldn't do those things. Those things can have some value today. You're standing up for righteousness. But what I am saying is that when we have to resort to doing that it reveals the level of influence the Bible is having on our society. In a Bible friendly society you never have to legislate biblical morality, it's already how people think. And so if we have to go through all this petition signing, send \$20 to some organization, etc., it just shows that we're living in a time and place when Christianity is impotent. And that impotence is due to failure to teach the word of God. If you haven't noticed Bible teaching is not exactly a popular thing in churches today. Most of what goes on is paganism under a veneer of Christianity. Lip service is given to the God of the Bible but then we go on propagating the pagan consensus. And if you do stay firm with the Bible you're looked upon as some kind of a radical.

Today we continue our study of Paul's third missionary journey. In the establishment of Christianity in the west Paul made three missionary journeys. We studied the first two, the first goes into the region of Galatia, the second extends all the way to Europe, and both of these two missionary journeys were primarily evangelistic. The third missionary journey is not so; the third missionary journey started out from Antioch, just like the second, as a follow up operation. And Paul went out to the Galatian churches and then proceeded west to the Aegean Sea at a place called Ephesus. It was at Ephesus where in Acts 19 he spent two years and computing from the Western texts reading, we find out that during siesta time Paul taught a minimum of 3,120 hours of Bible doctrine. Since the average Christian today gets only one hour a week of teaching this computes to about 60 years of

normal Bible teaching that the Ephesian church got condensed into a two-year program. This is amazing; it's amazing because in our own day we have such resistance to the teaching of the doctrines of Scripture. We have a tremendous antagonism among many believers that you can get spiritually fat on too much teaching. But that can't be because here we have Paul teaching and teaching and teaching and teaching and teaching four to five hours a day in Ephesus for a total of over 3,000 hours of instruction.

Now this is the so-called secret of the early Christian church. You've heard that the early church turned the world upside down. That didn't happen because they got together and held hands, that didn't happen because they started a youth program. The reason it happened was simply that they studied and studied and studied to the point they had a tremendous grasp of the resurrected Christ. I don't mean they said, yeah, Jesus Christ rose from the grave. I mean they understood what that meant for space-time history. They understood that the resurrected Christ signaled the end of history, that the first piece of the new heavens and new earth was already in existence at the right hand of the Father and therefore history was drawing to a close. Time was running out and there was a whole world full of people in need of the salvation Christ offers. If you don't have that kind of an understanding you can't understand what you're trying to do. And that kind of understanding requires thousands and thousands of hours of high level teaching and training. And so, this third missionary journey is characterized by an intense effort at training, training, and more training.

Now, this has application to the Christian life. You start out when someone comes to you and proclaims the gospel and you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. At that moment you're like a new little baby in the world and there's a lot of growing up to do. You don't know what the growth program is, or what the Christian life is all about, but hopefully someone explained to you that it's found in the word of God. And hopefully you enter into some kind of training program at a local church; a place where the word of God is taught week after week after week in a consistent, systematic pattern. And you sit and you take it in and you grow, just like a little baby lays in mommas arms, takes in milk and grows. You ought to be getting milk doctrine, the basics; Creation, the Fall, the Flood, the Noachic Covenant, who God is, who man is, what nature is, sin and evil, judgment and salvation, basic Bible doctrine. You have to have these. There's little advancement apart from these

foundational truths. And we know if you have a poor foundation eventually the whole house will come crumbling down. So you lay the foundation and then you build. And when Paul went in he did just this, evangelized and followed up quickly with teaching. He got the churches established in the basics of the OT, what I call the historical framework and then Paul would appoint some men in that church and then leave them in the hands of the Holy Spirit.

Now, Acts 20 shows you what comes next. Now that these churches are established it's time for more training, further advanced training. Verse 1, **After the uproar had ceased Paul sent for the disciples**, and **disciples** in the Book of Acts always means believers in training, believers who day in day out attended Paul's lectures. These are the ones who have the 3,120 hours of Bible doctrine, these are the top men at Ephesus. He tells them his plans, he appoints elders if they weren't appointed already and exhorts them, encouraging them to hold fast to the faith, to fight the good fight of faith and then he leaves. The men he leaves are going to build on Paul's foundation. Did Paul build a strong apostolic foundation? The strongest foundation these people knew from their local experience was the Temple of Artemis. Chersiphron, the Greek, had designed the foundation. He had it built on the marshlands to avoid devastation by earthquakes; he had a layer of small charcoal laid and finally a layer of sheepskins with unshorn fleece. All this to make sure the Temple of Artemis would last forever. Now, does the Temple of Artemis appear to have lasted forever in this picture? Is the Church of Jesus Christ still alive and well today? Who laid the better foundation? Paul the apostle or Chersiphron, the architect?

And so, having laid a firm foundation those men can now build on that foundation, one by one evangelizing Asia and training them in doctrine, building up the body of Christ. But Paul **left to go to Macedonia** ²**When he had gone through those districts and had given them much exhortation, he came to Greece.** Now, Macedonia is the large province in the northern regions of modern Greece. This is where Paul went when he had the vision of the man calling from Macedonia, come over and help us. **Greece** was the province in the southern regions of modern Greece, including the Peloponnesian peninsula and it refers to the province of Achaia, and in particular Corinth. Paul returns to these two provinces.

Why is he going to Macedonia and Achaia? To go back to those churches, already established and to exhort them. What's the **exhortation**? Well, we have first of all, Paul sailing from Ephesus, he comes to Troas; it doesn't say that here but we gather it from 2 Cor 2:12ff. It was a brief stop on the way. He was looking for Titus, he couldn't find him so he went on to **Macedonia** and somewhere in **Macedonia** he finds Titus (also 2 Cor 2:13 and 7:16). Titus had been at Corinth and he brought a report to Paul about the spiritual problems they were facing and the progress that had been made. Paul, upon hearing this realized there were still problems at the church but there was good progress so he's not as anxious as he was before to go to Corinth. Instead he writes 2 Corinthians and sends the letter by Titus. In the meantime, Paul is visiting the Church at Philippi and he's going through his follow-up procedure. He visits Thessalonica, he visits Berea, all the churches he established in Macedonia, he follows up with strong training. And somewhere in here we think he even went far out west, as far as Illyricum on the eastern shores of the Adriatic Sea, that's Rom 15:19. And then he makes his way south to Greece, in particular to Corinth. In other words, observe. Paul writes them a letter, sends it by way of Titus and gives them time, time for the doctrine to soak in. Probably about 6-8 months, then he returns to see how they've responded. Paul gave these people time to grow, time to advance spiritually, to get some of their basic problems solved and then he arrives, verse 3.

And there he spent three months, so here he is around Corinth and if we assume he follows the same teaching schedule he followed in Ephesus, which was five hours a day, six days a week then we can compute the total number of hours of training Paul gave them - in three months he would have covered 375 hours. By comparison that would come to about seven years of instruction for the average Church today. So again notice the emphasis: Paul takes seven years of instruction and packs it into a 90-day Bible camp. Why? Because that's how important it is. How are you ever going to grow without Bible teaching. There can't be any Christian growth without it, there's just no way.

Now, during these three months he also writes the epistle to the Romans. So watch, if you have your chart from last week pull it out, if you don't have one look on with someone who does. Watch because Paul's in a period of his own transition. Early on his emphasis is missionary journey one and two,

evangelism and basic training. Now what's the emphasis? Advanced training, almost exclusively advanced training. And with this new emphasis Paul's writing pace picks up. You can see it right on the chart as you move through the missionary journeys Paul writes more and more and more content. That's not only a reflection of what these people need, but it's also a reflection of Paul's new focus. Why a new focus? Because he knows he's not going to be around much longer. He begins from this point on to predict over and over that his life is almost over; he doesn't have much time left. So what does he do? He begins to write, he begins to put Bible doctrine down on parchment, down in a permanent, transmittable form. And therefore to preserve for you and I, Paul is becoming more and more of a writing apostle.

So he writes Romans and then in v 3, at the end of the **three months...a plot was formed against him by the Jews as he was about to set sail for Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia.** Now, don't read that as Paul was run off, he was about to set sail when this **plot was formed.** And we know who formed the plot: the same Jews who Paul drove nuts before in the Corinthian synagogue. He reasoned with them till they kicked him out. And then he moved into the house next door, a house literally touching the synagogue, and Paul ministered from there and then the leader of the synagogue, Crispus became a believer and his family with him. So the synagogue had to get a new leader, they chose Sosthenes. And Paul kept ministering for another year and a half and the Jews finally rose up against Paul and took him to the judgment seat. And who of all men was sitting on the judgment seat? Gallio, the nicest man in the whole Roman Empire. And his decision, one of the most significant court cases ever in the history of the Christian church, paved the way for the legal proclamation of Christianity under Roman law until the time of Nero. Literally, the way was paved for Paul and his companions to proclaim the gospel all over Rome. And after that, what else did the Jews of Corinth have against Paul. Not only did they lose their first synagogue leader to Christianity and the case before Gallio but finally the new leader of the synagogue, Sosthenes, became a believer too. So, needless to say I think you can now see why they wanted to assassinate Paul.

So here's Paul, he's down at the harbor about to set sail. Everybody's heading to Jerusalem for Passover, so it's going to be a crowded ship, and Paul's going to be a very easy target for an assassin's knife. Who catches

wind of it? Obviously the Christians and they warn Paul. It's very interesting how the early Christians had guys on the inside who gathered all kinds of intelligence data. In some texts we think they have information inside the Emperor's household. So there came to be Christians in every rank of society and they were tremendous intelligence gatherers and informers, and Paul catches wind of an assassination plot so he resorts to go back **through Macedonia** far from danger.

Verse 4, **And he was accompanied by Sopater of Berea, the son of Pyrrhus, and by Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia.**

Now, you read that and you think, oh, that's a nice little list, not much to it. Don't read too fast. Let's look at those names and the places where they come from. What this list shows is what Paul was up to at this time in his life, actually two things.

The first man is **Sopater of Berea, the son of Pyrrhus**. We think Pyrrhus was king of the Greek kingdom of Epirus who led costly military campaigns against Macedonia and Rome centuries before. And this man was his descendant; he'd been won to Christ and was well trained. He's from Berea; he was one of the noble-minded Bereans. Now Berea is located in Macedonia. He's a top man from Berea. He's going to work within that local church to train up the believers.

The second and third man, **Aristarchus and Secundus**, are both from **Thessalonica**. So they're right next door to Sopater. We have three top men in Macedonia working in local churches, training believers. Then **Gaius of Derbe**, where's that? Way over to the east in the Galatia region. **Timothy**, he's from Lystra, also in the Galatia region, so we have two top men here. Then **Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia**, they're probably from around Ephesus, in the region of **Asia**. What's the point? What's Paul up to? He is establishing leadership in various geographical regions in the recent expansion of the Christian church. What do you suppose he's doing with these men as they travel? He's training them to be the leaders of the next generation. Alright, you've heard me teach, now let's step it up a notch, you've heard me talk, now let's walk. Talking the talk is one thing, walking the walk is another. You've got to have both. These men are the top men in training for the next generation. Paul knows in the later chapters of Acts that

he's going to die. Paul knows that his time is limited and therefore he has got to train men for the next generation so he begins taking these men with him. Who else did this in the NT? Where did Paul get his model? Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ gathered to himself twelve top men; one was a devil so we'll say eleven top men to go into the field. So we have the rise of a training program for leadership. This has got to happen in any group if that group is going to survive.

This is why about two years ago I picked five men and I said, alright men, I'm willing to train you for awhile and we began to meet once a week and we began to study and to ask questions and study some more and ask questions. The whole time the goal is that I'm going to leave, I'm not going to be in this group forever. I want you to learn and to study and to grow and then I want you to take five men and train them. I want you to do the same thing with them and pass it on. This is why when Dick Roesch came in and we talked about a problem we saw in the church that when new people walk into Fredericksburg Bible Church and we are in the middle of Amos and we're talking about 15 different doctrines they've never heard the names of before. What is going on here, what is all this stuff? And it's a problem. So the question was, how we get people up to speed that haven't been here? It's tragic this kind of thing has to happen because it shows you that the churches out there aren't doing their job or we wouldn't have to do that. But it's a problem we try to remedy. Dick took the first section of the Framework we're teaching in Sunday School and condensed it into ten lessons, ten Monday nights to help people get on the same page. And the goal is to do this kind of a class periodically to get people up to speed.

Now, for the other purpose of this trip turn to Rom 15:25. Here he's telling the Romans about his desire to come see them on his way to Spain, a passage we saw last week. Spain was Paul's far-reaching project. But verse 25, "now, I am going to Jerusalem serving the saints. ²⁶For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem." Where did we say a handful of these guys were from? Macedonia. Paul's probably the representative for Achaia, the Gentile churches have made a financial contribution, so Paul's got these Gentile representatives of these churches coming with him. There's not going to be any scandal in the handling of the funds. Everything done in order. And notice the reason, verse 27, "Yes, they were pleased *to do so*, and they are indebted to them." Who are

them? The Jewish saints. Why are they indebted to Jewish saints? “For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual things, they are indebted to minister to them also in material things.” See, you and I are Gentile believers. But salvation is of the Jews. It was the Jewish nation from which Jesus Christ came. Jesus Christ was a Jew. And He’s the source of our salvation. So every Gentile believer is indebted to the Jews, everyone of us. Every spiritual thing you have comes through the Jews. And therefore doesn’t it logically follow that we should support Jewish believers who have financial burdens? I talked to Jeff Gutterman a few months ago; he’s a Messianic Jew who’s doing his seminary training. He’s started a small mission to Jewish believers called My Firstborn Son. He tells me there are many evangelical organizations that support the Jewish people. Most of them just support Jews in general, believer or unbeliever, mostly unbeliever. But if you’re supporting an orthodox Jewish group and they discover that you’re also supporting Messianic Jews then that’s it. They will cut you off immediately; they will not receive funds from you. You’re blacklisted. So most organizations today give only to the non-Messianic Jews. The vast money of evangelical financial support is going to non-believing Jews. I know of one and only one organization that gives exclusively to Messianic believers and that’s Gutterman's, My Firstborn Son. Call him, he’s based out of Melissa, TX, just north of Dallas, and you can find out more about what you can do. So that’s the second purpose for this trip, the Gentiles were indebted to the Jews so they were taking funds to the poor saints of Jerusalem, Rom 15:25-26.

Acts 20:5, **But these had gone on ahead and were waiting for us at Troas. We sailed from Philippi after the days of Unleavened Bread, and came to them at Troas within five days; and there we stayed seven days.** Now, an interesting story here at Troas, a humorous story; the Bible has quite a sense of humor as most of you have probably gathered. But before we handle it notice for this event something fantastic has happened in verse 5. Someone else has entered the story. What pronoun do you see at the end of the verse? **us**. Now we haven’t seen that since chapter 16:17 at Philippi. Who was with Paul back at Philippi? The author of Acts. Who’s the author of Acts? Dr Luke. Dr Luke is now on hand as first hand medical expert for the event that follows.ⁱ

And notice, Luke is very precise in his research; he keeps a log book of every event. **We sailed from Philippi after the days of Unleavened Bread, we**

came to Troas, it took **five days**;ⁱⁱ we stayed there **seven days**. Verse 7, **on the first day of the week**, all these little notices show you how meticulous Luke was.

And they come to **Troas**. Evidently there was already a group of believers there and so as Paul passed through, on his last night there he took the opportunity to give them some training. It was **the first day of the week**; now the debate is whether this is the Jewish reckoning of the week or the Roman. If it's the Jewish then it's Saturday evening, if it's the Roman then this is Sunday evening. Probably they met on Sunday evening. The resurrection of Jesus Christ on the "first day of the week," Sunday morning was so significant to the early Christians that they no longer met on Sabbath but on Sunday. Sabbath is not Sunday, there's no such thing as a Christian Sabbath. The Sabbath is still the Sabbath and Sunday is still the first day of the week. Don't confuse, they met on Sunday so that the very day they were gathered was the very day the most significant event in space-time history occurred, the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Every Sunday morning you ought to rise and remember it's the day of the resurrection, the day of the resurrection, we're going to worship the resurrected Christ, the end of history came on the horizon almost 2,000 years ago, that's why we meet on this day and that's why the gospel is an urgent message, an urgent appeal to be reconciled to God through faith in Jesus Christ. But in any case, while we meet in the morning v 7 shows they met in the evening, notice this whole event happens at night. It was simply the way it was in those days, most of the Christians had to work on Sundays in the morning till afternoon siesta and then again till about 6pm. So they gathered together we can estimate about 7pm Sunday evening **to break bread** and Paul began to teach the word. Now, if you follow in the text for a few verses you'll see the next episode which should be covered in every preacher's homiletic course.

Middle of verse 7, **Paul began talking to them, intending to leave the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight.** ⁸**There were many lamps in the upper room where we were gathered together.** ⁹**And there was a young man named Eutychus sitting on the window sill, sinking into a deep sleep; and as Paul kept on talking, he was overcome by sleep and fell down from the third floor and was picked up dead.** ¹⁰**But Paul went down and fell upon him, and after embracing him, he said, "Do not be troubled, for his life is in him."**

Now the interesting thing about this particular episode is those of you who have access to the Greek see that Luke must have observed the whole thing as an eyewitness because of the way he describes what's happening. He's obviously attending this Bible study and he's obviously keeping his eye on this guy. The picture I get from this text is that Luke is sitting across the room of this third story room and it's kind of dark in the room so he's taking his notes as Paul is teaching but then he looks over and sees this kid sitting in the window sill. And he looks over periodically at this kid and the next time he looks over the kid is nodding and he starts nodding more, he's really losing it, that's the picture.

Now, you can see this in the shift of the verb tenses in v 7, in v 7 Luke shifts to the imperfect voice, watch, **Paul began talking**, imperfect voice, which means he went on and on and on. And then it says **he prolonged**, another imperfect voice, a very visual verb, actually means to lay down, to prolong, to stretch out. This verb is pure irony, probably exactly what people want to do when a message drags on and on. And look how late it went, **until midnight**. Now we said Paul started at 7pm. It's been a five hour sermon. Remember I said the emphasis was on doctrine; 3,000 hours at Ephesus, 375 hours at Corinth, here he had just one overnight stop, the first day of the week, he had one shot at the Christians so he said okay, I got one shot, I'm going to give it to them, ten hours total; this is only the halfway point in the sermon. It shows you the tremendous mental capacity of the people of the ancient world, except for this man Eutychus. The point is that Paul taught and taught and taught and he didn't teach on a deadline, nobody piped in, hey, Paul, your time is up. These people were hungry for the word of God and they listened to the word of God for five hours straight. Now do see why the early church was strong?

So it's a lengthy message in verse 7; verse 8 adds, **There were many lamps in the upper room where we were gathered together**. To add to a lengthy message they've got little oil lamps with wicks and they're burning and flickering and smoking in the room, releasing heat and sulfur in the air. Luke is observing all this, they're on the top floor, the hottest room in the house but they have to meet there because it's the biggest room. And so what's the point? The point is that Luke is a physician and he's a very observant man; and he observes it's late, it's hot, the lamps smell, the crowd is thick and Paul's voice going on and on and on. Verse 9, **Eutychus** this

young man **sitting on the window sill, sinking into a deep sleep**; and here's how we know Luke was watching this kid. Notice how it says **sinking into a deep sleep** and then later on in the sentence, **he was overcome by sleep**. The first one **sinking** is a present participle, he's watching the kid, the first thing he closes his eyes, then he starts to nod off and he jerks up, if you've never seen this then you ought to come up here sometime. And this kid's sitting on the window sill so his body will lean and he'll catch it and Luke's across the room watching this, probably chuckling. And then the next verb comes: **he was overcome by sleep**, and that's an aorist tense, it means lights out, the guy was fighting to stay awake but he just could not fight any more and it's that moment in time when you konk out and bam, he falls out the window. Luke looks over, the kid's not in the window anymore. They looked out, the kid is down on the street, the kid fell three stories out the window onto the street. This of course is a warning to some of you. Do not go to sleep in Bible class because I can't do what Paul does next.

Now, it says they went down and he **was picked up dead**, which means they took him up into the house and they were all satisfied that this guy was dead. Dr Luke checked his pulse, yeah, the kid's dead. There was no question, he fell three stories and went smack on the concrete. But fortunately Paul was there, and that's the meaning of Eutychus' name, fortunate, and indeed he was.

This is a case for emergency medicine; Paul is going to do a kind of first aid I don't suggest. Verse 10, **But Paul went down and fell upon him, and after embracing him, he said, "Do not be troubled, for his life is in him."** Now anyone who knows the OT and reads verse 10 carefully, there should be an image that triggers a bell to you because what's happening in verse 10 is a living image of two happenings in the OT. Remember who they were? Elijah and Elisha. Both of those OT prophets were known for their resuscitation. Now it doesn't mean that they went around giving resuscitation to everyone but it does mean on spectacular occasions those men, of all the men in the OT brought people back from the dead and that's the significance of those little fine points in verse 10, how Paul **fell upon him**.

Now if a guy's fallen three stories and broken half the bones in his body it's not quite the best first aid to fall on the guy. If you're thinking it's a wrestling

move it's not but it's pretty close because what he does is he embraces the guy with both arms and squeezes the guy and crushes him. That doesn't sound right but that's exactly what Paul's doing. In other words, this is not your normal first aid. But when Paul did it he was simulating the work of Elijah and Elisha and that's Luke's point, that the same mantle of prophetic miracles that Elijah and Elisha did to vindicate the kingdom of God has now fallen on the shoulders of Paul. Paul has the same capacity as they did.

*Now in Acts 20:11 it shows you how important Paul considered the word of God; did Paul say, alright, that's it, class dismissed? **When he had gone back up and had broken the bread and eaten, he talked with them a long while until daybreak, and then left.** So now we've got sermon number two. Sermon number one from 7pm to midnight. Sermon number two from 1am to daylight. So ten hours, broken only by this kid falling out of the window. They picked him up, he was resuscitated, and Paul figures, now is as good a time as any to have communion, so they break bread and then they came back for more teaching. This time, a different word used for the teaching than in v 7, this is less formal, it's more give and take, Paul evidently discussed, much in the form of a seminar, for the second five hours.*

Now, this shows us a couple of things. For one, it shows you how hungry these people were to hear the word of God. They knew what very few college students have yet to figure out, that life was not about how much sleep you get but about how much of the word of God you get, Eutyclus excepted. Another thing, they knew the importance of hearing a great Bible teacher and they knew they weren't going to be able to hear him tomorrow so they did all they could to listen to him all night. The greatest Bible teachers have tremendous things to offer and I could name a few that have kept me up till 2 and 3 in the morning. I relish going to the conferences I go to and staying with top Bible teachers. I want them to pour into me everything that God the Holy Spirit has poured into them. It's always worth staying up all night for and these people thought the same thing. And finally, it shows us this man Paul tirelessly taught the word of God. This man is one of the most energetic individuals you can ever imagine. And that one little event like a teenager falling out of window isn't going to deter him from teaching the word of God. All night Paul taught and taught and taught. And I can only imagine how Paul would be received today if he ever tried a stunt like this.

And so, v 11, Paul leaves, another reading of v 12 shows they actually brought the young lad to Paul as he departed and then vv 13-16, the trip from

Troas to Miletus. Watch what happens. **But we, going ahead to the ship, set sail for Assos, intending from there to take Paul on board; for so he had arranged it, intending himself to go by land.** Alright, they're going to go down the coastline. Luke and the others go out and get on the ship, they're going to sail around a peninsula, a 40 mile trip. Paul's going to go by land, it's about half the distance. Now the guy has just taught the Bible all night long, now he's going to walk 20 miles? What did I say about this man? Tremendous energy. Now we don't know why he chose to walk, some have suggested he wanted to be alone, others he disciplined men from Troas along the way, we don't know, but we do know Paul managed his time very wisely so let's watch how he does it in v 14, **And when he met us at Assos, we took him on board and came to Mitylene.** ¹⁵**Sailing from there, we arrived the following day opposite Chios; and the next day we crossed over to Samos; and the day following we came to Miletus.** ¹⁶**For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus so that he would not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hurrying to be in Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost.** So they're just going down the coast. But a note on v 16: despite how dry this may appear, we can learn something from v 16. **Paul decided to sail past Ephesus.** Now obviously Paul was anxious to get to Jerusalem **if possible on the day of Pentecost**, that's a fourth class condition. In other words *if* and it's a remote possibility at this point, he has no time to waste. Paul was a man who knew how to manage his time. Paul knew there were some things that if you had several things to do some of those things have to be dropped. And in v 16 Paul drops fellowship with believers. Now that may sound strange to you but he deliberately dropped having fellowship with other believers and taught, from verse 17 on, just the elders who were in Ephesus and briefed them on a few things and taught them some doctrine before he moved on. It was not, in other words, his number one plan always to have fellowship with believers.

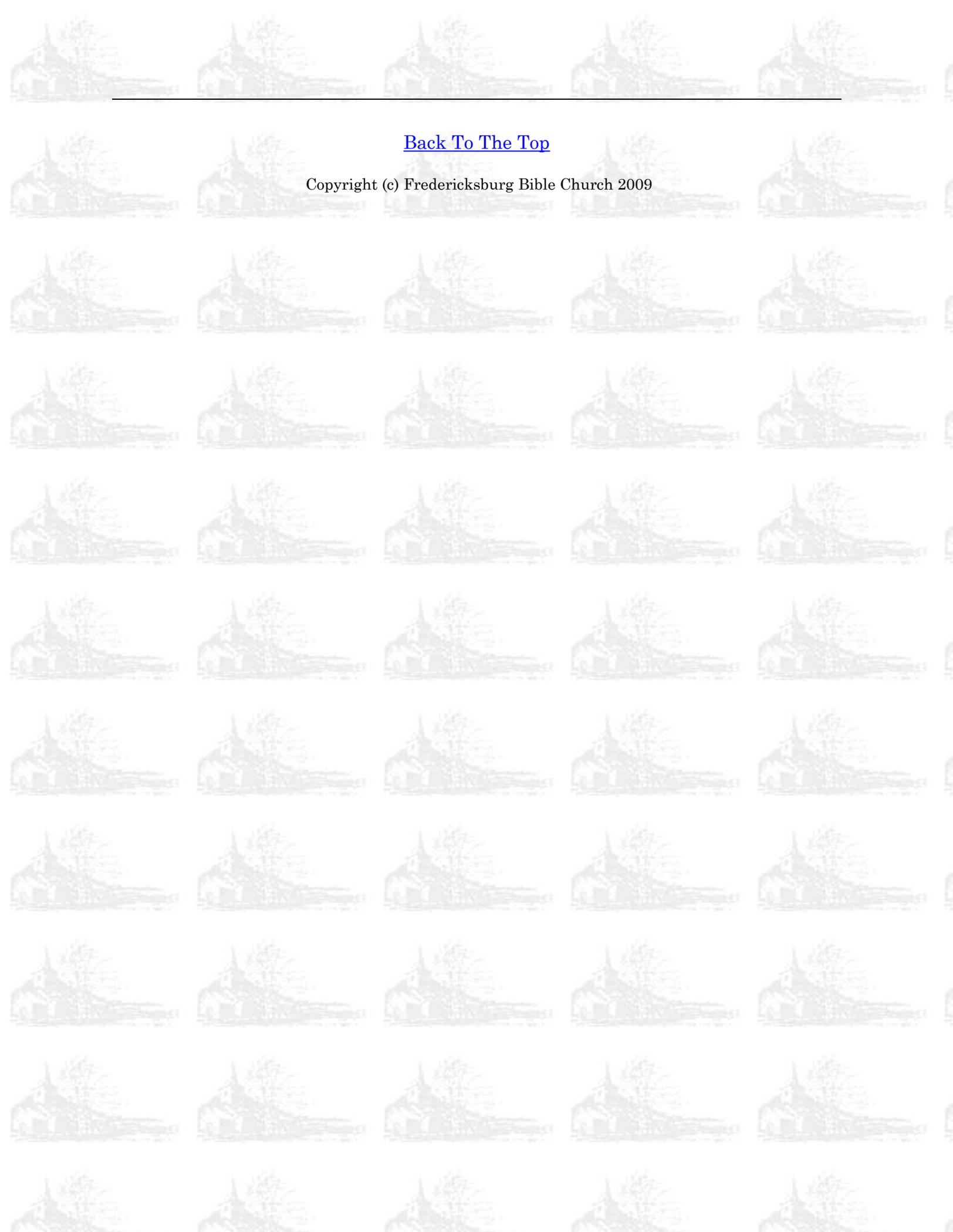
I mention this only because in our circles we're constantly criticized for not having enough fellowship. We're not against fellowship, fellowship is fine, fellowship is good, I encourage it and we can have little get-togethers and so forth, that's good. But a problem comes very easily if you allow it to. Monday night you've got something; Tuesday night you've got something; Wednesday night you've got something else; Thursday night something else; Friday night something else, Saturday night something else. Now where's the time for your marriage? When are you going to develop that? When are you going to

have a little excursion with your wife, take her out or do something exciting? Where's the time for the family? When are you going to sit down and teach your kids Bible? How many nights a week do you do that? Where did all that time go? Well, it's gone, that's where, and so you've got to fight against the well, everybody's doing it mentality. You have to be able to say, who cares? You've got a marriage and family and so you better fight and give attention to your marriage and family because they're more important than all that fellowship. So, it's not wrong to say to someone, I appreciate the invitation, we'd love to fellowship, but right now my marriage and family have to come first. They do, biblically, they do. And even Paul who was not married and had no family often said, no, I've got other more important things to do. I pass by fellowship in Ephesus to reach Jerusalem. And finally, why? We can say why from other epistles. His goal was to get the financial gift from the Gentiles to the Jews on that day; he wanted to present this gift to the Jewish saints on the day of Pentecost. There have to be priorities in life and we get those from the divine institutions; responsible labor, marriage, family, civil government in that order.

Now, what have we seen? We've seen training, hour after hour of training in Bible doctrine. Paul didn't waste any time fooling around. Paul trained men in the word of God. It's not true that you can get too much of the word of God. It is true that you can get too little, far too little. And this is a lesson the church has failed to learn from Paul. Paul was tireless, he went on and on and on training men to the point he had guys falling out the window on account of it was midnight and he wouldn't close down the sermon. Now I'm not going to do that to you today, Lord knows I can't bring you back to life. But this passage and the training program at Ephesus should cause every one of us to pause and ask ourselves, what am I here for? What in the world did God put me here for? And what am I doing with my life? Where am I spending all my time? Am I training hour after hour, day after day, teaching and teaching and more teaching, listening to CD after CD after CD or am I wasting time piddling around, checking my e-mail for the 99th time.

ⁱ Luke will stay with Paul all the way till Rome and it is during this long stretch of time that Luke is going to ask Paul question after question in his research for the Book of Acts (AD62-63).

ⁱⁱ In chapter 16 the reverse trip took two days. One day from Troas to Samothrace, one day from Samothrace to Neapolis. So if the return trip took five days, which the Greek indicates, then we gather they had adverse winds on the return trip.



[Back To The Top](#)

Copyright (c) Fredericksburg Bible Church 2009