

# Paul's Boring Sermon

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake from multiple Internet sources)

Introduction: Acts 20:7-12

- A. Kenneth Gangel co-author of the Holman Old Testament Commentary said:  
"Attend church regularly - especially on Sunday - and try not to fall asleep."
  - 1. David H.C. Read - "The worst sin in preaching is dullness."
  - 2. Almon Williams - "There are no boring sermons, only dull hearers."
  - 3. Even though Eutychus was the first person to be recorded dozing off during a sermon, most of us can be numbered among his successors.
  - 4. Have you ever fallen asleep in worship? It might have embarrassed you, but it most likely didn't kill you.
- B. To me, Eutychus may be misrepresented by many teachers and preachers.
  - 1. He obviously wanted to hear more about God. Why else would he still be in the house listening to Paul at midnight?
  - 2. Even though the house was overcrowded, Eutychus found a place to stay, on the third-story windowsill.
- C. Have you ever watched someone drift off to sleep during a sermon?
  - 1. If people are going to fall asleep in worship it's almost always during the sermon, it's never during communion or a hymn. I've got a great view from up here.
  - 2. From here it starts with the heavy eyes, and then the jello-necked head nod, and finally, the slump. It's hard to tell if you are drooling or snoring. What's really fun is watching a sleeper get elbowed by a spouse. Their eyes get big, and they are suddenly at full attention for a few moments.
  - 3. The elders at one congregation were asked why they didn't have padding on the back of the pews. They were told, these are pews, not easy chairs, and if someone falls asleep and hits their head on the back of the pew, they want it to leave a mark.
  - 4. There's an old story of a Bible class teacher who asked her students why it is necessary to be quiet in church? One bright little girl replied, "Because people are trying to sleep."
  - 5. The Pope got caught nodding off during mass; one of his assistants had to shake him awake.

## I. THE SETTING

- A. Troas was an important seaport; founded in 306 B.C. by Antigonus, a successor of Alexander the Great
  - 1. Located 10 miles south of the city of Troy; originally called Sigeia
  - 2. Made a Roman colony by Augustus (31 B.C.); it had a population of 100,000; Constantine considered making it the capital of the Empire.
- B. Paul visited Troas several times during missionary journeys
  - 1. On his second journey, it is where he was joined by Luke - Acts 16:8,11
  - 2. On his third journey, he went there after leaving Ephesus
    - a. Acts 20:1; 2Cor. 2:12-13
  - 3. Again on his third journey, after leaving Philippi - Acts 20:6

## II. THE SERVICE

- A. On the first day of the week; literally, “the first of the Sabbath” (sabbaton)
  - 1. Sabbaton denotes a period of seven days or a week - Matt. 28:1
  - 2. The day of the week on which Jesus rose from the dead
  - 3. The day of the week in which the church began - Acts 2:1-47
  - 4. The day of the week disciples were to lay by in store - 1Cor. 16:1-2
  - 5. The day that came to be called the Lord's Day (Didache 14:1)
- B. They came together on the first day of the week to observe the Lord's Supper
  - 1. Luke 22:19-20; Acts 2:42, 20:7; 1Cor. 10:16-17, 11:17-34
  - 2. A practice continued by the early church (Didache 14:1; Apology I, 67)

## III. THE SERMON

- A. The speaker was a special guest, along with eight other guests - Acts 20:4-6
  - 1. A guest speaker was an apostle of Jesus Christ who had established and strengthened churches throughout the Mediterranean world
- B. The content of the lesson is unknown, but can be guessed based on what we know of Paul
  - 1. It could have been first principles of the gospel of Christ - Rom. 1:14-17
  - 2. It could have been exhortations to moral living - 1Thes. 4:1-5
  - 3. It could have been encouragement to steadfastness - Acts 14:21-22
- C. Whatever the subject, it was a long sermon
  - 1. He continued his message until midnight - Acts 20:7
  - 2. He resumed and talked until daybreak - Acts 20:11
  - 3. What a treat it must have been to hear the apostle Paul preach! Wait! Didn't the critics say that he was a tedious preacher? - 2Cor. 10:10

## IV. THE SLEEPER

- A. A sleepy setting
  - 1. In an upper room with many lamps; large room near the residue of the heat of the day; warmed by a crowd of people and many lamps over a long period of time; hypnotic flickering of lamps; perhaps worked all day
  - 2. Paul talked a long time; Eutychus was overcome by sleep - Acts 20:8-9
- B. A fortunate young man
  - 1. Eutychus means “fortunate, lucky”
  - 2. He fell from the third story and was taken up dead - Acts 20:9
  - 3. Paul went down, embraced him - Acts 20:10; 1Kings 17:21; 2Kings 4:34
  - 4. Paul reassured them - Acts 20:10; Mark 5:39
  - 5. Paul ate, talked until daybreak, and departed - Acts 20:11
    - a. Not the Lord's Supper; it was Monday
    - b. “Here the compound ‘broke bread and ate,’ signifies an ordinary meal, not the Lord's Supper.” (Longenecker, The Expositor's Bible Commentary)
    - c. “The second reference to 'breaking bread' seems to take that phrase beyond the Lord's Supper and describes what could well be called a midnight snack.” (Gangel, Holman New Testament Commentary on Acts)

### C. A comforted congregation

1. With the young man brought in alive, they were comforted - Acts 20:12
2. They heard a great deal of wisdom from Paul - 2Peter 3:15
3. They witnessed the resurrection of Eutychus - 2Cor. 12:12
4. Too many think the only benefit derived from Acts 20:7 is authority to eat the Lord's Supper every first day of the week; this text is much richer than that.

## V. THE SOLUTION

### A. What can you do to stay awake?

1. Pinch yourself. Hard. Better yet, pinch the person in front of you. I guarantee you, once you do that, both of you will stay awake for the rest of the service.
2. Pray for the preacher. "If a congregation wants a better preacher, they should pray for the one they already have." Pray for yourself to be more spiritually minded.
3. Get involved in the sermon. Ask yourself, is that really true? Look up the scripture references. Take notes. To a large extent, listeners get out of preaching exactly what they put into it. Members must come to worship ready to hear, understand, and be changed by the Word. The hearer's attitude is as important as the speaker's when it comes to effective preaching.
4. Change your expectations. God's Word is meant to be life-changing, not entertaining. You are not here to be entertained, and this is not Walt Disney or Paramount Studios; but, neither can they change your life and save your soul.
5. And it's not the worst thing if your mind wanders, but it's too small to be left out on its own for long. It is acceptable if you think about another spiritual matter briefly, but you are the master of your own mind. Return your focus to the worship we are engaged in together.

### Conclusion:

- A. Psalm 84:1-4; Matt. 18:20