

Acts 20: Paul's Parting Proclamation

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

- A. When Christians part on friendly terms, such partings can generate an odd mix of healthy emotions: 1) sorrow, 2) comfort, and 3) joy
 - 1. While parting with faithful brethren is sorrowful, for Christians there is great hope of reuniting with them.
 - 2. "Those who do not weep, do not see." (Victor Hugo)
 - 3. "Sorrow prepares you for joy. It violently sweeps everything out of your house, so that new joy can find space to enter. It shakes the yellow leaves from the bough of your heart, so that fresh, green leaves can grow in their place. It pulls up the rotten roots, so that new roots hidden beneath have room to grow. Whatever sorrow shakes from your heart, far better things will take their place." (Jalaluddin Rumi)
 - 4. Psalm 126:5 - "Those who sow in tears Shall reap in joy."
- B. Acts 20:17-28

I. SORROW

- A. Paul's parting words to the elders at Ephesus brought sorrow - Acts 20:36-38
 - 1. He knew that he wouldn't be coming back that way; their earthly relationship was at an end.
 - 2. The elders grieved because of their deep love for him.
 - 3. Permanent partings bring sorrow because they end an active loving relationship.
- B. We don't like to have things dear to us taken away.
 - 1. It starts when we are children when we learn what is important and valuable. We learn that relationships are critically important.
 - 2. We are deeply grieved when they end, and that is natural and by design. God created us to develop attachments to precious things
 - 3. Our parents, our spouses, our children, our brethren, our friends, our God and our Savior, our souls
 - 4. God inspired the Bible writers to use five words for love, inspired them to write that love is His defining characteristic, and built all of His law and will on the two great commandments of love.
 - 5. Of course we are going to be sad when we are parted from that which we love. It is natural and healthy. It is proof of love
 - 6. Let sorrow remind us, not of our loss, but of our love for one another.

II. COMFORT

- A. Jesus provided great comfort to His disciples at His parting - John 14:1-3
 - 1. He gave them even more comfort by telling them how they can get there - John 14:6
 - 2. They had to trust His assurances and follow His instructions in order to be comforted

3. We are comforted by trusting and believing Him, and we continue to be comforted by our faith that the Way He gave us will one day reunite us
- B. Parting brings comfort because it gives us an opportunity to exercise our faith and to choose to hope for a reunion - Acts 20:32
 1. As long as we abide in God's word, then even though we are parted, we can be comforted by the hope and assurance based on one another's faithfulness, that we will see each other again.

III. JOY

- A. We will see the face of God and His Son - Rev. 22:1-5
 1. We will be together forever - Rev. 22:14.
 2. Parting brings joy because it reminds us of a place where there will never be another parting.
 3. 1Thes. 4:13-17
- B. Our love for our brethren and our desire to see them again can motivate us to greater faithfulness and obedience in anticipation of the great joy that awaits us as we are reunited in heaven.
 1. Acts 20:29-38

Conclusion:

- A. In another parting, Paul's final epistle and last letter to his son in the faith, Timothy, he wrote: 2Tim. 1:7-12