

ACTS CHAPTER 20

PAUL'S FAREWELL TO THE EPHESIAN ELDERS

A. Paul in the region of Macedonia again.

1. (Acts 20:1) From Ephesus, Paul travels to Macedonia.

After the uproar had ceased, Paul called the disciples to himself, embraced them, and departed to go to Macedonia.

a. **After the uproar had ceased:** The rioting in Ephesus (Acts 19) had convinced Paul to move on, so he went westward across the Aegean Sea to Macedonia (modern Greece).

b. **Paul called the disciples to himself, embraced them, and departed:** Paul couldn't leave without this demonstration of love to his fellow followers of Jesus. He spent two very fruitful years in Ephesus, but it was now time to go.

2. (Acts 20:2-5) Travels through Greece and Macedonia.

Now when he had gone over that region and encouraged them with many words, he came to Greece and stayed three months. And when the Jews plotted against him as he was about to sail to Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia. And Sopater of Berea accompanied him to Asia; also Aristarchus and Secundus of the

Thessalonians, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia. These men, going ahead, waited for us at Troas.

a. **When he had gone over that region and encouraged them with many words:** Paul spent his time working with the churches he had already established, as recorded in [Acts 16-17](#).

i. “One activity that especially concerned Paul at this time was collecting money for the relief of impoverished believers at Jerusalem...Paul viewed it as a symbol of unity that would help his Gentile converts realize their debt to the mother church in Jerusalem.”

ii. Paul’s extended time in this region may help to explain a bit of a puzzle. In [Romans 15:19](#), Paul made this claim: *So that from Jerusalem and round to Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ*. The puzzle is that the Book of Acts never specifically mentions a visit by Paul to Illyricum, but it may fit in here at [Acts 20:2-3](#), where Paul **had gone over that region... and stayed three months**. Illyricum is due west from Thessalonica, and there was a famous Roman Road (the *Via Egnatia*) that went between Thessalonica and the Roman province of Illyricum. Today, the area

of Illyricum is modern day Albania, on the eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea, with the mainland of Italy westward across the water.

iii. The mention of Illyricum in [Romans 15:19](#) reminds us that the Book of Acts, as wonderful as it is, *is by no means a complete accounting* of all that God did through His people in the first century.

There is much, even in the life of the Apostle Paul, that is not described — not to mention the life and work of many, many others.

b. **When the Jews plotted against him as he was about to sail to Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia.** From Greece, Paul had planned to take the long journey by sea directly back to Syria (where his sending church at Antioch was), but the plotting of some anti-Christian Jews made him take a more overland route back through Macedonia, accompanied by many companions.

i. “It may have been planned to attack him on board ship, especially if the vessel was crowded with Jewish pilgrims for Passover or Pentecost.”

c. **Sopater of Berea... Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians... Gaius of Derbe... Trophimus of Asia:** These traveling companions of Paul were probably representatives from other churches who had sent money with Paul to Jerusalem. They

were also present as ambassadors from the churches Paul has founded among the Gentiles and were there to vouch for Paul's good stewardship in regard to the collection destined for Jerusalem.

i. **Aristarchus** and **Secundus** both came from

Thessalonica. **Aristarchus'** name was connected with *aristocracy*, the ruling class. It's likely that he came from a wealthy and powerful family. **Secundus** was a common name for a slave. It meant "Second." Slaves were often not called by their true names, and the first-ranking slave in a household would often be called *Primus*. The second-ranking slave was often called **Secundus**. It's nice to think of Christians from both high and low stations in life serving the Lord together, from Thessalonica and helping the Apostle Paul.

B. Back to Troas and the region of Asia Minor (modern day Turkey).

1. (Acts 20:6) Arrival at the city of Troas.

But we sailed away from Philippi after the Days of Unleavened Bread, and in five days joined them at Troas, where we stayed seven days.

a. **We sailed away from Philippi... joined them at Troas:** Paul sailed back across the Aegean Sea, eastward towards the Roman province of Asia Minor.

b. **We sailed away... we stayed seven days:** Luke has resumed the **we** narrative. He met Paul in Philippi and then sailed with Paul to Troas where they met Paul's other traveling companions. Paul had left Luke in Philippi in [Acts 16:40](#).

2. ([Acts 20:7-12](#)) A long sermon and Eutychus raised from the dead.

Now on the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight. There were many lamps in the upper room where they were gathered together. And in a window sat a certain young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep. He was overcome by sleep; and as Paul continued speaking, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead. But Paul went down, fell on him, and embracing *him* said, "Do not trouble yourselves, for his life is in him." Now when he had come up, had broken bread and eaten, and talked a long while, even till daybreak, he departed. And they brought the young man in alive, and they were not a little comforted.

- a. **Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread:** This is the first *certain* example we have of Christians making a practice to gather together on the first day of the week for fellowship and the word — though here, it seems they gathered in the evening, because Sunday was a normal working day for them.
- b. **Spoke to them and continued his message until midnight:** Paul sensed the need to preach for a long time because he was **ready to depart the next day**. He knew he might never see these particular Christians again — so he preached for some six hours to them!
- c. **A certain young man named Eutychus... fell down from the third story and was taken up dead:** The combination of the late hour, the heat, and perhaps the fumes from the oil lamps made the young man Eutychus fall asleep. His fall and death certainly would have put a sour note on the meeting.
- i. It is comforting for any preacher to think that people might fall asleep during the preaching of even the Apostle Paul. Yet, Paul taught for many hours and after a long day of work for most of his audience. There is also some evidence that Eutychus *fought* the sleep the best he could: “The tenses of the Greek verbs portray

poor Eutychus as being gradually overcome despite his struggle to remain awake.”

ii. Yet in the end, sleep got the best of him: “The word translated ‘sleep’ is the word from which we derive our English word *hypnosis*.”

d. **Do not trouble yourselves, for his life is in him:** Paul, again receiving the gift of faith from God, sensed that God would raise this boy from the dead — and God did.

i. “Paul’s comment that the boy’s *life* was *in him* refers to his condition after he had ministered to him. Luke would not have devoted space to the raising up of somebody who was merely apparently dead.”

e. **Talked a long while, even till daybreak:** Paul, obviously getting their attention back, continued preaching until daybreak.

C. Paul’s address to the Ephesian elders.

1. **(Acts 20:13-17)** Paul comes to Miletus and sends for the elders of the church in Ephesus to meet him there.

Then we went ahead to the ship and sailed to Assos, there intending to take Paul on board; for so he had given orders, intending himself to go on foot. And when he met us at Assos, we took him on board and came to Mitylene. We sailed from there, and

the next *day* came opposite Chios. The following *day* we arrived at Samos and stayed at Trogyllium. The next *day* we came to Miletus. 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 at Jerusalem, if possible, on the Day of Pentecost. From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church.

a. **Intending himself to go on foot:** Paul apparently preferred to walk from Troas to Assos instead of sail with the rest of his group; but he sailed with them from Assos to Miletus (**we took him on board**).

i. Paul “stayed till the last possible moment, probably to be assured of Eutychus’s complete restoration to consciousness and health, and then took a shortcut by land to join the ship at Assos.”

b. **Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus:** Paul’s intention wasn’t to slight the church in Ephesus, but he knew that it would be impossible for him to have a *short* visit there, and he wanted to hurry so as to be **at Jerusalem, if possible, on the Day of Pentecost**.

c. **From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church:** Though Paul knew he couldn’t make a *brief* visit to Ephesus, he still wanted to pour his heart into the leaders of the

church at Ephesus. So, **from Miletus**, he **called for the elders of the church** to come for a special meeting.

2. (Acts 20:18-21) Paul begins his farewell to the elders of Ephesus by recounting his work among them.

And when they had come to him, he said to them: “You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you, serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews; how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”

a. **And when they had come to him, he said to them:** Most of the time in Acts, we see Paul the evangelist; but here in [Acts 20](#), we get a unique picture of Paul the pastor — what was important to him as a leader and shepherd of God’s people.

i. “It is the only Pauline speech delivered to Christians which Luke has recorded, and it is not surprising to discover how rich it is in

parallels to the Pauline letters (especially, in fact, to the later ones).”)

b. **You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you:** Paul first calls attention to himself as an example. Not an example *instead* of Jesus, but an example as he followed Jesus. Paul didn’t act like a religious celebrity and expect people to serve and honor him; he just wanted to be **serving the Lord with all humility**.

i. In a similar pattern, we can each be good examples of how to live the Christian life. There is no reason for us to not be so. Even the young, new Christian can be a good example of how a new Christian should follow Jesus.

c. **I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you:** Paul could solemnly say before these elders of the Ephesian church that he **kept back nothing that was helpful**. He didn’t only teach the topics that pleased him. He **proclaimed it** all.

i. **Testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks:** If Paul didn’t limit his message, he didn’t limit his audience either. He wanted to preach all the word of God to all people.

d. **From house to house:** This implies that the Ephesian church, lacking any central building, was organized logically in house-churches. Probably, each elder had charge over a particular house-church. These were much more like house-church pastors than what we think of today as a board of elders who presided over one large congregation.

3. (Acts 20:22-24) Paul speaks of his future.

“And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me. But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.”

a. **I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there:** Paul didn't know what was ahead of him; he even had reason to believe it was bad. But that didn't trouble him. He could give it all over to God even when he didn't know what

would happen. There should always be more Christians who will say, **“none of these things move me.”**

i. *Uncertainty* did not move Paul. Even though he was **“not knowing the things that will happen to me there,”** he would not be moved from his cause. Paul could sing this Psalm from his heart: *I have set the Lord always before me; because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved.* (Psalm 16:8)

b. **Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me:** Paul recognized the dangerous road ahead of him; apparently, he had received many words of prophecy telling him of this danger already. Yet he was not set off the track by danger but was willing to lay down his life for **the gospel of the grace of God.**

i. **Nor do I count my life dear to myself:** Paul thought of himself as an *accountant*, weighing carefully the credits and the expenses; and in the end, he does not count his own life dear to him, compared to his God and how he can serve him.

ii. **So that I may finish my race with joy:** Paul thought of himself as a *runner* who had a race to finish, and nothing would keep Paul from finishing the race with joy. Additionally, Paul speaks of *my*

race — he had his race to run, we have our own — but God calls us to finish it with joy.

iii. This shows that even at this point, Paul had his death in mind. It would be many years until he actually died, but he considered that what he did with his life now was *worth dying for*. In the words of Spurgeon, he preached *a gospel worth dying for*. It is a worthy challenge to any preacher: Is the gospel you preach worth dying for?

- The gospel of moral reform? Not worth dying for.
- The gospel of save yourself through good works? Not worth dying for.
- The gospel of social action and improvement? Not worth dying for.
- The gospel of religious traditions? Not worth dying for.
- The gospel of merely having spiritual conversations? Not worth dying for.
- The gospel of mystical mumbo-jumbo? Not worth dying for.

- The gospel seeking the church of true hipness? Not worth dying for.
- The gospel of self-esteem? Not worth dying for.
- The gospel of ecological salvation? Not worth dying for.
- The gospel of political correctness? Not worth dying for.
- The gospel of emergent church feel-goodism? Not worth dying for.

iv. “Yet there used to be a gospel in the world which consisted of facts which Christians never questioned. There was once in the church a gospel which believers hugged to their hearts as if it were their soul’s life. There used to be a gospel in the world, which provoked enthusiasm and commanded sacrifice. Tens of thousands have met together to hear this gospel at peril of their lives. Men, to the teeth of tyrants, have proclaimed it, and have suffered the loss of all things, and gone to prison and to death for it, singing psalms all the while. Is there not such a gospel remaining?”

4. (Acts 20:25) Paul announces that he probably won’t see the Ephesian elders again.

“And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more.”

a. **You all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of**

God: Paul did a lot in Ephesus. In that city God used him to work some amazing miracles.

- Acts 19:11 says that in Ephesus, the hands of Paul did *unusual miracles*.
- Acts 19:12 says that in Ephesus, handkerchiefs or aprons from Paul’s body were brought to sick people and they were healed and delivered from demonic spirits.
- Acts 19:15 says that in Ephesus, demonic spirits said they knew Paul and his ministry.

i. With all that, Paul didn’t say to the Ephesian elders here, “You all, among whom I did some awesome miracles.” Or, “You all, among whom even the demons said they knew me.” Instead Paul was always focused on the life-transforming power of the word of God, and he said **“You all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God.”**

ii. It's as if Paul said, "This is what I do. Sure, I do a lot of other things, but at the core I'm a preacher, and I preach the kingdom of God."

b. **You all... will see my face no more:** Paul here showed great sadness, great compassion, and great courage. He told them something he hadn't told them before: that this would probably be the last time they saw him, and he saw them. This would be like a bombshell to these church leaders.

i. Don't forget the great bond Paul had with these Ephesian leaders. He was in Ephesus for two years, and the ministry was so effective that [Acts 19:10](#) says, *all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.*

ii. That amount of time and that kind of effective ministry builds bonds of fellowship and friendship that last.

iii. It was hard for them to believe it. Maybe at first they thought he was joking. But they quickly understood that he wasn't and they understood why he asked them to walk 36 miles to meet with him.

c. **Will see my face no more:** In all of this, Paul's great love and concern for the leaders and the congregation in Ephesus was simply a

reflection of Jesus' great love and concern for them. Paul followed Jesus in every way he could; since Jesus loved these believers so much, so did Paul.

i. It's fascinating to think of how much this segment of Paul's life mirrored the life of Jesus.

- Like Jesus, Paul traveled to Jerusalem with a group of his disciples.
- Like Jesus, Paul was opposed by hostile Jews who plotted against his life.
- Like Jesus, Paul made or received three successive predictions of his coming sufferings in Jerusalem, including being handed over to the Gentiles.
- Like Jesus, Paul declared his readiness to lay down his life.
- Like Jesus, he was determined to complete his ministry and not be deflected from it.
- Like Jesus, he expressed his abandonment to the will of God.

ii. Would we expect any different? Is the servant greater than his Master? We too should expect to know *the fellowship of His sufferings* (Philippians 3:10).

5. (Acts 20:26-27) Paul's solemn declaration of his innocence before God.

“Therefore, I testify to you this day that I *am* innocent of the blood of all *men*. For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.”

a. **Therefore:** There is much wrapped up in this simple word. It has the sense of, Because I probably won't see you again... because I love you so much...because I have invested so much of my heart and life among you all... you therefore need to know that.

b. **I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men:** As if he were giving witness in a court of law, Paul declared that his heart was clear. He could leave these Christians to God's care with a good conscience, knowing that he had **not shunned to declare to [them] the whole counsel of God.**

i. We should have a greater appreciation of the value of a *clear conscience*. God helping us, we can have one — at least as clear as possible from this point forward.

c. **The whole counsel of God**: Paul could leave them with a clear conscience because he knew that he taught them **the whole counsel of God**.

i. [Acts 19:9-10](#) tells us that Paul taught the Ephesians and those in the region for more than two years, using a rented room from *the school of Tyrannus*. There are some indications that Paul taught for several hours a day, and some six days a week. This means hundreds of hours of teaching time (probably well more than 1,500 hours).

ii. He had plenty of time to take them verse-by-verse through the books of the Hebrew Scriptures. They may have also studied the life of Jesus from some of the accounts of His life being written in that same period.

iii. Today, there should be more and more who will present **the whole counsel of God**. Paul later warned that in the last days, people would not endure sound doctrine, but would look for teachers who would tell them what they want to hear — teachers who would scratch their itching ears ([2 Timothy 4:3](#)).

iv. Many preachers today simply use a Bible text as a launching pad, and then go on to say what they want — what the people want

to hear. Others throw in Bible quotations to illustrate their points, or to illustrate their stories. Yet the real calling of a preacher is to simply let the Bible speak for itself and let it declare its own power.

v. Taking Paul's testimony at full strength, we must say that those preachers who deliberately fail to **declare... the whole counsel of God** are *guilty of the blood of all men*. The preacher who preaches what his audience wants to hear, and not **the whole counsel of God**, hurts both his audience and himself!

6. (**Acts 20:28**) Encouraging them to take heed to themselves and to God's people.

“Therefore, take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”

a. **Therefore**: This is Paul's second **therefore** in this section. The first *therefore* looked at his own life (*I testify to you that I am innocent of the blood of all men*). This second **therefore** instructs the leaders of the Ephesian Christians.

b. **Take heed to yourselves**: “Pay attention to your own life. You have a high standard to fulfill. The standard isn't perfection, but it is

nevertheless high. You won't fulfill that high standard without paying attention to it, if you don't **take heed to yourselves**."

i. These words from Paul were all the more dramatic knowing the tension and the atmosphere of this meeting. These words mattered.

ii. The godly leader knows that effective leadership flows from a life, not just knowledge.

c. **Take heed... to all the flock**: "Pay attention to the people of God. Love them, look over them, care for them. Do it because **the Holy Spirit has made you overseers**."

d. **To shepherd the church of God: Flock** has the idea of *sheep*; **shepherd the church of God** continues that thought. He is telling them to be pastors, **to shepherd the church of God** — to serve their house-church congregations as faithful pastors.

i. The first idea behind being a shepherd is *feeding* God's people.

"They are to *be shepherds* of God's church, *poimanino* meaning in general to *tend* a flock and in particular *to lead a flock to pasture and so to feed it*. This is the first duty of shepherds."

ii. Shepherds don't only *feed*; they also *lead*. Under the guidance of the Chief Shepherd and in the community of God's people, they lead the people of God to where God wants them to be.

e. **Which He purchased with His own blood**: This is one important reason *why* they had to take heed to themselves and to the flock of God. They had to do it because *the church doesn't belong to them*, it belongs to Jesus who **purchased** it **with His own blood**.

i. Any responsible person is going to take greater care of something that belongs to someone else. Leaders need to remember that the church belongs to Jesus. Taken together, it's really a wonderful balance:

- The sheep need to remember that God has appointed shepherds to feed and lead them.
- The shepherds need to remember that the flock belongs to God, and not to them.

ii. Considering the greatness of the price, this calls leaders among God's people to be dedicated and godly: **His own blood**.

7. (Acts 20:29) Take heed to the flock because of danger from the outside.

“For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.”

a. **For I know this**: Paul presses the urgency here, warning these leaders that **savage wolves will come in among** them all. He knew that a pastor, a leader among God’s people has to do more than only **feed** and **lead** — he also has to *protect*.

i. Paul doesn’t say how he knew; only that he did **know**.

b. **Not sparing the flock**: These wolves would be vicious. They wouldn’t hold back against the people of God but take as many of them as they could.

8. (Acts 20:30) Take heed to the flock because of danger from the inside.

“Also, from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.”

a. **Also from among yourselves men will rise up**: It is often easier for pastors to deal with the wolves that come from the outside — obviously false teachings and goofy winds of doctrine. But it is often very difficult to deal with those who rise up **from among yourselves**.

i. Imagine how *these men listening to Paul* would have received this. It would be hard to believe, and like the disciples with Jesus, many of them would say, “Not me, Lord!”

b. **Speaking perverse things**: This is their *method* — they would *twist* what was good.

c. **To draw away the disciples after themselves**: This is their *motivation* — they wanted a following. Ego can make people do things that they *never* thought they would do.

9. (Acts 20:31) Further encouragement to watch.

“Therefore, watch and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.”

a. **Therefore watch**: This was Paul’s third **therefore** in such a short section.

- He gave one *therefore* about himself (his clear conscience, Acts 20:26).
- He gave a second *therefore* about what they should do (take heed, Acts 20:28).
- This third **therefore** is given after the urgency of taking heed has been explained.

b. **Remember that for three years I did not cease to warn**

everyone night and day with tears: Paul asked them to have the same careful concern for the people of God that he himself had.

- It was a long-term care (**for three years**).
- It was a constant care (**did not cease**).
- It was a watchful care (**to warn**).
- It was a universal care (**everyone**).
- It was a heart-felt care (**with tears**).

10. **(Acts 20:32-35) Paul's conclusion: Remember a heart of sacrifice.**

“So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. I have coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me. I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

a. **I commend you to God and to the word of His grace:** Though Paul gave his all for the Christians in Ephesus for some three years, at the bottom line, he could only **commend** [them] **to God and to the word of His grace**. Paul knew there was trouble ahead for him, and some trouble ahead for the Ephesian Christians. Yet **God** and **the word of His grace** would see them through.

i. Programs can't do it; the spirit of the age can't do it; slick marketing can't do it; entertainment can't do it; only **God** and the **word of His grace** can **build you up and give you an inheritance** in heaven.

b. **I have coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel:** Paul concludes by trying to communicate his heart, his *motive* in ministry. He wasn't in it for himself, but for God's glory and for the building up of God's people. **Laboring like this** means that Paul was a hard worker for God's glory.

c. **It is more blessed to give than to receive:** His parting words, taken from a quote of Jesus' unrecorded in the gospels, are perfect for all who would minister to God's people. Leaders must be more concerned about what they can give their flock than concerned about what their flock can give them.

i. Without a heart of *sacrifice* there can be no real effective, eternal ministry — and it should be a *glad sacrifice*, knowing the blessedness of it all.

ii. **“It is more blessed to give than to receive”** is the best beatitude of all. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus told us how to be blessed; here, He tells us how to be **more** blessed!

iii. It should not stumble us to consider that Jesus taught many things unrecorded in the gospels; John said as much in [John 21:25](#). But we can trust that God has preserved all that is *necessary* of the teaching of Jesus.

11. ([Acts 20:36-38](#)) Paul’s tearful good-bye to the Ephesian elders.

And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. Then they all wept freely, and fell on Paul’s neck and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spoke, that they would see his face no more. And they accompanied him to the ship.

a. **He knelt down and prayed with them all. Then they all wept**

freely: This reminds us that Paul was not a cold dispenser of doctrine,

but a warm, pastoral man who loved his people greatly and won great love from them.

b. **That they would see his face no more:** They part with prayer, tears, and a sending-off party, believing they would only meet again in eternity.

i. Given the strength of Paul's warning to these leaders; it is fair to wonder how the Christian community in Ephesus fared after this.

Some 30 to 40 years later, Jesus sent a letter to this church in Ephesus, found in [Revelation 2](#). He complimented them on many things:

- Their hard work for the kingdom of God.
- Their endurance through difficult times.
- Their dealing with those who are evil, and with false apostles.
- Not giving up when they were weary.

ii. Yet despite it all, Jesus gave them a severe warning: they had left their first love ([Revelation 2:4](#)). Unless things changed in a hurry, Jesus wouldn't even be present among them anymore.

iii. It may well be that in their zeal to fight against false doctrine — which they seemed to do well — they left their love for Jesus and their love for one another behind. It's a great illustration of the principle that the devil doesn't care which side of the boat we fall out of, just as long as we're in the water and not in the boat.