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ACTS

ALERT AND ORIENTED ACTS 20

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. What would you say if you knew you only had one last opportunity to be with the ones that you loved?
 - 1. Focus on what is important – what is necessary
 - 2. No time for wasted words
- B. That is what we have in the text before us
 - 1. Paul has come to the end of his third and final missionary journey
 - 2. Sets his face towards Jerusalem – as he travels, he visits the churches that he planted for one last time, knowing he will not see them again
- C. There is a weight to his words, great sense of significance as he reminds and reestablishes the church in its purpose
 - 1. Something we all need right now – so many people are walking around in a daze, shellshocked by the last two years (car accident)
 - 2. Health assessment - In certain health assessments, orientation is sometimes referred to as "alert and oriented"
 - a) Four degrees of alert and oriented – Oriented to person (know their name and the names of others), Oriented to place (where they are), Oriented to time (day of the week, time of day, who is the president), Oriented to situation (why they are in the hospital, or why they are speaking with the doctor, what happened)
 - b) AOx4 would mean that the patient is alert and oriented to all four degrees
 - 3. Fifth degree – what are we doing and why are we doing it?
 - a) What is our purpose? – reevaluating what is important, what should I be doing?
 - 4. Prayer is our study in the book of Acts would help us to reorient ourselves and our lives around things that matter

Acts 20:1 After the uproar (the gospel exposing and tearing down idols) had ceased, Paul called the disciples to himself, embraced them, and departed to go to Macedonia. 2 Now when he had gone over that region and encouraged them with many words, he came to Greece 3 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. 4 And Sopater of Berea accompanied him to Asia—also Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus (Tich-i-kus) and Trophimus (Trof-i-mus) of Asia. 5 These men, going ahead, waited for us at Troas. 6 But we sailed away from Philippi (Luke) after the Days of Unleavened Bread, and in five days joined them at Troas, where we stayed seven days.

II. READING A MAP

- A. Kind of passage that we quickly overlook in our studies – almost reads like a genealogy
 - 1. Approach scripture with curiosity – asking why? Why did Luke record this? Why did God preserve it?
- B. What was Paul doing?
 - 1. During this last missionary journey Paul wrote his letter to the Romans, and his 1st and 2nd letter to Corinthians

2. Encouraging and exhorting these young churches one last time
3. He was collecting an offering from each of the churches to take back to Jerusalem
 - a) **Rom 15:25 Now, however, I am on my way to Jerusalem in the service of the Lord's people there. 26 For Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the Lord's people in Jerusalem. 27 They were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews' spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings.**
4. This gift served a twofold purpose
 - a) Jerusalem was entering a time of intense persecution - for both Jews and Christians (was seen as just another version of Judaism)
 - (1) The destruction of temple was just a few years away
 - b) Many Jewish converts were still skeptical of Paul's ministry (which we see in chapter 21)
 - c) Gift from gentile believers to Jewish believers to further unify the early church as one body
- C. Paul is taking with him representatives from each of these churches to take their gift to Jerusalem – (faces to the names)
 1. (Thessalonians) Aristarchus/aristocrat - Secundus/second servant (Primus and Secundus)
 2. The socioeconomic walls coming down in the name of Jesus

Acts 20:7 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. 8 There were many lamps in the upper room where they were gathered together. 9 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. 10 But Paul went down, fell on him, and embracing him said, "Do not trouble yourselves, for his life is in him." 11 Now when he had come up, had broken bread and eaten, and talked a long while, even till daybreak, he departed. 12 And they brought the young man in alive, and they were not a little comforted.

III. BORED TO DEATH

- A. Details matter – Luke isn't wasting words on an amusing story
 1. First day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread
 2. The Jews would gather on the Sabbath, Saturday – this is the first mention of early Christian's meeting on the first day of the week – Sunday
 3. What's difference does a day make? Highlights the importance of the resurrection of Jesus to the early church – for them it just made sense
 - a) We gather together because Jesus is alive, so let's gather on the day that He rose from the grave
 4. It was at these Sunday gatherings that they shared a meal together, known as love feasts – everybody would bring something to share, and they would all eat together.
 - a) One commentator points out - This love feast was especially significant for the slaves because it was probably the only good meal they had all week long. But in the church there was neither bond nor free, you know, they were all one in Christ.

- b) At these gatherings they would follow Jesus' instructions to eat of the bread and drink of the cup in remembrance of Him – His body was broken and His blood shed for them
 - 5. It is at one of these gatherings that Paul is sharing – and he has a lot to say
 - a) Again, if you know it's the last night you will see someone you love on this side of eternity you are not going to cut that short
- B. Eutychus (good fortune) sitting in a window
 - 1. Many lamps burning – heat, carbon monoxide – leads to this young man falling asleep and falling three stories out of the window
 - 2. Paul went down, fell on him, embraced him, and said “Don't worry, he is alive.”
 - a) Some argue that he just had the wind knocked out of him but that misses the point of the story
 - b) Why? Why did Luke include this event in documenting the life and ministry of Paul?
 - c) We trust Paul, we trust his writings, we trust his authority – we have the entirety of the New Testament that establishes him as a representative of Jesus Christ led by the Holy Spirit
 - (1) At this time, not all believers were fully convinced, especially Jewish converts
- C. Is there a phrase that sticks out in verse 10? Paul went down and fell on him, and embracing him...
 - 1. ***1 Kings 17:17 Now it happened after these things that the son of the woman who owned the house became sick. And his sickness was so serious that there was no breath left in him. 18 So she said to Elijah, “What have I to do with you, O man of God? Have you come to me to bring my sin to remembrance, and to kill my son?” 19 And he said to her, “Give me your son.” So he took him out of her arms and carried him to the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his own bed. 20 Then he cried out to the Lord and said, “O Lord my God, have You also brought tragedy on the widow with whom I lodge, by killing her son?” 21 And he stretched himself out on the child three times, and cried out to the Lord and said, “O Lord my God, I pray, let this child's soul come back to him.” 22 Then the Lord heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came back to him, and he revived.***
 - 2. 2 Kings 4 – Elisha does the same thing to the son of a Shunammite woman who has died – verse 34 – he fell on her son and his flesh became warm – twice he did this – the child sneezed seven times and the child opened his eyes
 - 3. Events that established Elijah and Elisha as men of God
 - a) Here we have Paul, on a day celebrating the resurrection of Jesus, resurrecting a young boy and sounding a lot like Jesus - Mark 5:39 | When He came in, He said to them, “Why make this commotion and weep? The child is not dead, but sleeping.”
 - b) Life giving Spirit of Christ working through Paul - Desire to see people raised from the dead - wasn't a passive desire, or a desire from a distance - he took the boy up to himself
 - 4. And then they calmly shared communion together – the miraculous was part of their gathering – a gathering of the resurrected – isn't that a picture of the true church

Acts 20:13 Then we went ahead to the ship and sailed to Assos (as-oohs), there intending to take Paul on board; for so he had given orders, intending himself to go on foot. 14 And when he met us at Assos, we took him on board and came to Mitylene (mit-a-leen-a). 15 We sailed

from there, and the next day came opposite Chios. (hee-os) The following day we arrived at Samos and stayed at Trogyllium.(tro-gilliam) The next day we came to Miletus. (My-lee-tus) 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 at Jerusalem, if possible, on the Day of Pentecost. 17 From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church. 18 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, 19 serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews; 20 how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, 21 testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. 22 And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, 23 except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me. 24 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. 25 "And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more. 26 Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. 27 For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.

IV. ONE LAST STOP

- A. Paul gathers the elders of Ephesus together - he is leaving, and they will not see him again so in a way this is his upper room discourse
 - 1. Elders - Presbyteros – old man – advanced in life
 - a) Experienced in Jesus
 - b) Experienced something that is undervalued in the internet age – when information is simply a google search away
 - (1) Some things can't simply be googled – How do I get through raising a teenager? How do I deal with the loss of a child?
 - c) Experience matters
 - 2. Goes on to call them overseers – Episkopos – guardians
 - a) This is a gathering of the experienced guardians – no doubt they were leaders in the church but anyone who has experience walking with Jesus is a leader in some compacity
- B. So begins his last words – starts with "You know"
 - 1. Paul testifies – Similar to Samuel before the nation of Israel
 - 2. "You know how I lived among"
 - a) Humility, willing to endure pain and suffering for the message he had been given
 - 3. "You know what I taught"
 - a) I kept back nothing that was helpful, I proclaimed it to you, and taught you from house to house
 - b) Repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ
 - 4. It's our lives that give our words weight
 - a) The manner in which we live either gives our words substance or makes them light and insignificant
 - b) Well done must come before well said – Paul's life lived well only served to substantiate what he said
- C. Now I go bound to Jerusalem
 - 1. I don't know what waits for me there, except that the Holy Spirit tells me that chains and tribulations await me

2. And I go gladly – none of these things move me, nor do I count my life dear to me – I will finish my race with joy, and continue to share the grace of God made available through Jesus Christ until my dying breath
3. That is what is in store for me.

Acts 20:28 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. 29 For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. 31 Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears. 32 “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. 33 I have coveted no one’s silver or gold or apparel. 34 Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me. 35 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.’ ”

V. GOSPEL MEN

- A. Therefore – I am leaving now, the care of the church rests upon you.
 1. First – take heed to yourselves
 - a) Keep watch over your personal lives
 - b) Which he expounds on in Titus: appoint elders in every town, as I directed you. An elder must be blameless, faithful to his wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer manages God’s household, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather, he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.
 2. Then, take heed to the flock for which God has made you overseers
 - a) Guardians – those of you who are experienced in Jesus – do you take that role seriously?
 - b) Shepherding isn’t simply the role of the pastor – it is a role we all share – do well to care for those who God brings into our family
- B. Savage wolves from the outside
 1. Anyone or anything that gets in the way of loving Jesus and loving others well
 - a) Draws us away from our mission
 - b) Distract or lull us to sleep
 - c) Guardian watches for these savage wolves and calls them out
- C. Ambitious people from the inside
 1. People who want to draw people to themselves
 2. Make the gathering of the saints about them
- D. Look at my example – for three years I’ve warned you
 1. Instructed and admonished – taught and rebuked
 2. I didn’t do it for personal gain – I did this to show you that you must support the weak
 - a) Jesus said give – that is an experienced leader within the church – what can I give? Who can help?
 - b) That is what it means to be alert and oriented x5

Acts 20:36 And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. 37 Then they all wept freely, and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him, 38 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.

VI. CONCLUSION

- A. Do you ever wonder if anyone will miss you when you're gone?
 - 1. It is a question of significance and purpose. We don't want to get to the end of our lives and realize we never made an impact.
 - 2. Paul had invested in these men – years of equipping and counseling and training – because of that there was an immense amount of appreciation
- B. If your church ceased to exist would your neighborhood notice?
 - 1. If you left, would your church notice?
 - 2. Not a question about what we do, but who we are in Christ. Take heed to yourselves.
 - 3. Have I become disoriented? Lord reorient me to your purpose.