

Resurrection at Troas.

Acts 20:7-12.

Sunday, August 28, 2011.

I. Paul's return trip through Macedonia.

- A. Paul had spent the winter months with the church in Corinth, and he had planned to sail from Corinth's eastern port of Cenchrea on the Aegean Sea to Jerusalem in order to deliver to them the offering that had been taken up by the Gentile churches for their relief.
- B. However plans had to be changed when a plot, which the Jews had plotted against Paul, came to light. Paul decided to return through Macedonia instead, thus retracing his steps leading to Corinth in the fall.
- C. It was now springtime and Paul spent the week of Passover and the days of unleavened bread with the church in Philippi. No doubt he showed them how the Lord Jesus was the fulfillment of all that the Passover feast foreshadowed.
- D. Paul's travel companions, Sopater from Berea; Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica; Gaius from Derbe, and Timothy, Tichicus and Trophimus from Asia, had gone ahead of Paul to Troas, perhaps to make arrangements with the church there for Paul's unexpected visit.

II. Paul comes to Troas.

- A. Following the days of unleavened bread and the Passover feast Paul moves on to Troas where he would meet up with his travel companions.
- B. There are 50 days between the Feasts of Passover and Pentecost, and Paul was aiming to be in Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost, commemorating the wheat harvest. Paul would bring with him the riches of the Gentile harvest in the form of their offering, and present them to the Lord in Jerusalem. See vs. 16.
- C. Travel from Philippi to Troas would take five days, and Paul would spend a week in Troas, leaving him 38 days to reach Jerusalem. He is working under time constraints.
- D. There was another kind of constraint under which he was working. He opens up about this constraint to the Ephesian elders when he meets with them a little later. He tells them that in all the churches where he stops on the way to Jerusalem, the Holy Spirit testifies (through the first century prophetic gifts in the church) that chains and afflictions await him in Jerusalem. Vs. 22,23.
He goes on to say in Vs. 25 "Indeed, I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more."
- E. It is against this sense of urgency and time constraint that we must understand Paul's preaching and teaching, not just until midnight, (vs. 7), but beyond, even until the break of the next day. (vs. 11).

III. Preaching till midnight... and beyond.

- A. Paul, so it would appear, arrived in Troas on a Monday, for he stayed a week and his final day was a Sunday when the church came together for the purpose of "breaking bread," a reference to the weekly observance of the Lord's Supper.
- B. Here, as in other passages, we see that the church from the beginning got into the

habit of worshipping on the first day of the week, when the Lord Jesus rose from the dead, and when also the Holy spirit was given on the day of Pentecost.

- C. It was a solemn gathering as they knew that this church and the apostle would not see each other again in this world. Paul's heart is burdened for them; there is much he has to say to them. The church is gracious, giving him all the time he needs, even until midnight. Perhaps Paul's meeting with the Ephesian elders, which is recorded for us at length, gives us an indication of the kinds of things Paul was burdened about, and spoke about that night.
- D. The room had many (oil)lamps, depriving the room of oxygen and raising the temperature. A young man, likely a teenager, Eutychus, sat in a window seat. Falling into a sound sleep (teenage boys need their sleep), he tumbled out of the open window, three stories down to the paved street or courtyard below.
- E. Those who got down first picked up his lifeless body, likely bringing it into one of the downstairs rooms. The apostle discerned by the Holy Spirit that his visit in Troas was not to end on this note, and he does what Elijah and Elisha had done before him, stretching his own body over the lifeless form of this young man. As with Elijah and Elisha, the Lord granted here a wonderful restoration of life. 1 Kings 17:17-24 and 2 kings 4:33-36. The apostle reassures the family and the church saying: "Do not trouble yourselves (with funeral preparations which would have to be made immediately), for his life is in him."
- F. Following this event their meeting took on a whole new life; rather than breaking up and going to sleep they continued with a fellowship meal, of which the communion service was an aspect in those days, and further conversation until the break of day, when Paul had to leave for he had a boat to catch in nearby Assos, thus continuing his journey toward Jerusalem.
- G. A summary statement is given of the night: "They were not a little comforted" (encouraged, same word as in vs.2) It is a statement that qualifies not just the restoration of Eutychus' life, but the ministry of the entire night.

IV. Some lessons to glean from this passage.

1. In this passage there are two statements of purpose for the disciples' coming together on the Lord's day. Why do you come to church? Some come for the music; they enjoy the singing; others enjoy the social contact; they see their friends and acquaintances. Still others come to hear a good message, or at least they hope to get something out of it. Sadly today we need to mention those who come in hopes of being entertained.
These disciples came together "to break bread," that is first and foremost they came to restore and to affirm their communion with the Lord Jesus Christ. But because the Lord Jesus is joined to His body, the church, they also came to enter into, and to affirm their communion with one another.
2. The second pertains to a statement of purpose and accomplishment on the part of the apostle Paul. He set out to comfort or to encourage in vs. 2, and they were not a little comforted in vs. 12. This second part flows out of the first, and it requires from us a concern; an interest in others; a love for others, and an ordering of the affairs of our own lives in such a way that we have time and resources to devote to the needs of others. Are you working on that?