

Learning to Walk With God Day by Day

Acts 20:1-16

Introduction:

1. How many of you have had times of discouragement and disappointment in your Christian walk? Sometimes it is not easy to “keep on keepin’ on,” is it?
2. The apostle Paul had spent over two years in Ephesus, teaching the Bible and giving of himself. Paul had seen some incredible spiritual victories, but it all ended on a rather sour note. After narrowly escaping a frenzied mob in Acts 19, Paul decided it was time to leave. vs. 1
 - Paul may have been hated by the mob, but he was loved by the disciples. I’m sure Paul left Ephesus with very mixed emotions, but he had to move on.
3. Paul left to continue his third and final missionary journey. In verses 2-15, we have a record of Paul journeying into Macedonia, Greece, and back into Asia.
4. There is something that stuck out to me in verse 15. The phrase “*the next day*” is used three different times. Paul could not accomplish all that he endeavored to do in one day.
 - Many times we get impatient, and we want everything NOW. Life is not this way.
 - The Christian life isn’t either. It is a step-by-step, day-by-day walk with God. There are no shortcuts. It is a day-by-day growth process. It is not a 50-yard dash. The Christian life is a marathon.
 - Every believer must learn to walk with God day by day, over the long haul.
5. This morning, we will examine Paul’s travels from Ephesus to Miletus and derive three essential ingredients as to how we can walk with God day by day, over the long haul.

First, by recognizing your need for the fellowship of Christian friends - vs. 4-7

1. In verse 4 we have a list of the men who surrounded Paul on his trip back to Asia. As we study the Scriptures, we observe that these were all godly men that possessed Christian character.
2. Here is the simple principle we need to understand. Paul was a mighty apostle with dynamic gifts, yet he recognized his need for Christian friends.
3. Again, at Troas, Paul and his company are seen uniting with the believers in Troas for a time of Christian fellowship. vs. 6-7
4. Fellowship is a vital part of the Christian walk. It carries the idea of sharing things in common with others. Believers are united through a common belief in the gospel of Christ (Philippians 1:5), as well as a common position in Christ. 1 Corinthians 1:9
5. Therefore, a believer should desire fellowship with other believers. This is only natural because, after all, fellow believers are our spiritual family. It is natural instinct for a Christian to love fellow believers. Ephesians 3:14-15; 1 Timothy 5:1-2; 1 Thessalonians 4:8-10

6. This doesn't mean we segregate ourselves from lost people. The Bible is very clear that we have a responsibility to care for unbelievers and share the gospel of Christ with them. Galatians 6:10
7. But fellowship with other believers is crucial for a fruitful, day-by-day, Christian walk. 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13
 - It provides accountability in our walk.
 - We learn from each other in an informal setting (*"iron sharpeneth iron"*).
 - We discover each other's needs, how we can be a blessing, and how we can help.
 - Fellowship is often the stimulus for ministry.

Second, by maintaining a watchful attitude - vs. 7-12

1. We read an amazing story about a young man by the name of Eutychus. This young man's lack of alertness almost cost him his life.
2. Eutychus serves as an illustration of how many Christians have fallen into a spiritual slumber. Ephesians 5:14
 - Have you ever heard the expression "falling asleep at the wheel?"
 - Do you think it is possible to fall asleep at the wheel spiritually? We go through the motions, but there is no zeal, no fervency, and no sense of urgency. We just sort of sleepwalk our way through the Christian life.
 - This is very dangerous. Eutychus found this out. So did the disciples in the garden. Matthew 26:40-41
3. The Bible uses several different words, exhorting the Christian to always be alert in his daily walk.
 - Sober – on guard; sound in mind. Titus 2:12
 - Vigilant – watchful; attentive to discover and avoid danger. Derived from vigil – staying awake through the night. 1 Peter 5:8
 - Watch – keep awake. 1 Corinthians 16:13; 2 Timothy 4:5
4. Using this story of Eutychus, there are several principles we can derive concerning the importance of a watchful attitude.
 - When we fail to be watchful, tragedy can occur quickly.
 - Eutychus barely knew what hit him. His descent was rapid.
 - We can fall prey to temptation and a snare so fast if we aren't watchful and vigilant.
 - Have you ever done something sinful and wrong and then thought, "Why did I do that? I can't believe I did that!"? It was because you weren't watchful.
 - When we fail to be watchful, it causes pain.
 - Yes, Eutychus' life was spared, but how do you think he felt the next week? I'll bet you his chiropractor made a fortune off of him. I'm sure his pride was wounded too. How would you like to be known as the guy who fell asleep while the apostle Paul was preaching?
 - Many times the spiritual pain that we go through could have been alleviated if we had simply been alert.

- A lack of interest in God's Word is the first sign that we are lacking a watchful attitude.
5. Eutychus was obviously blinded to his own lethargy. If not, he probably would not have been three stories high. How about you? Have you been drifting into spiritual slumber?
 - Maybe you are spiritually drowsy, but you haven't even recognized it in yourself.
 6. Hopefully this message can be what kick-starts you and causes you to be watchful. Ask God to give you back that fervent, zealous love for Him and His Word.

Third, by taking times of solitude with God – vs. 13-14

1. Paul sent his entire company of workers by ship to Assos. But Paul traveled alone by land, walking to Assos.
2. This would be a time for Paul to enjoy some one-on-one communion with God and pray about his future ministry.
3. We live in a hectic, rat-race society today. It is so easy to get stressed out and become overwhelmed.
4. Having a daily time of solitude with God to worship, praise, and pray to Him is precisely what brings balance to our lives. It provides us a sense of peace and tranquility, even in times of pain and distress. Philippians 4:6-7
5. Jesus Christ would often separate Himself from the disciples in order to be alone with God the Father. Matthew 14:22-23
6. Do you have a regular time and place that you meet with God daily? You desperately need this if you are to walk with God over the long haul.