



# “Finish Your Race with Joy!”

## ACTS Chapter 20

### > (v1-16) A MISSION OF JOY!

(v1-5) Three keys to a joyful mission:

#1 - Disciples have been established!

#2 - It is a fellowship of embracing!

#3 - A work of encouragement!

(v6-7) Insight: The church met on the first day of the week.

- C.I. Scofield writes, “The early churches were specifically warned against submitting themselves to the bondage of any legalistic observance of Sabbath days.

Paul writes in Colossians 2:16 - *So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.*

Galatians 4:9-11 - *But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage? You observe days and months and seasons and years. I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain.*

On the other hand, in the exercise of their Christian liberty (Rom. 14:5-6), these same churches voluntarily chose the first day of the week as an appropriate time for fellowship and worship (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2), the day on which the Lord arose and repeatedly appeared to His disciples (Jn. 20:19-24,25-29).

It was a new day for a new people belonging to a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17), a day of commemoration and joy, service (Mt. 28:10), and spiritual rest (Heb. 4:9-10).

This observance of the first day of the week is corroborated by the early fathers: in the writings of Barnabas (c. A.D 100), Ignatius (A.D. 107), Justin Martyr (A.D. 145-150), and Irenaeus (A.D. 155-202). (This is good to share with 7<sup>th</sup> Day Adventist, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and anyone else that demands Christians are not saved unless they worship on Saturday.)

- They also came together to break bread (communion) for what purpose. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 11:26 - *For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. Our proclamation is in remembrance of our Jesus' love and sacrifice, and in anticipation for His return in the rapture of the church!*

(v8-16) Eutychus means *Fortunate*, but unfortunately for Eutychus he had to learn a lesson from the school of hard knocks, which is, “Never sit on the ledge of a 3<sup>rd</sup> story window while listening to a long Bible study.”

> (v17-38) A MINISTRY OF JOY! (Jesus—Others—You)

In verses 17-38 Paul speaks to the Ephesian elders like a commander to his troops, a coach to his team, and a father to his children. Paul also develops *five disciplines* to be exercised by every Christian and especially those in church leadership:

- Discipline #1 (v19-20) - Serving the Lord with all humility.

- Discipline #2 (v21-26) – Testify the right gospel!

Which is repentance toward God; faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ; the gospel of the grace of God; preaching the kingdom of God; tell everyone.

- Discipline #3 (v27) - Teach the whole counsel of God’s Word!

Paul exhorts Pastors in 2 Timothy 4:1-5- *I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.*

- Discipline #4 (v28-32) – Shepherd the flock of God and beware of wolves!

Jesus warns us regarding wolves in sheep’s clothing in Matthew 7:15-29 -

*"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them. "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!' "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. "But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain*

*descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall." And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.*

***- Discipline #5 (v33-35) - Laboring & Giving (1Peter 5:1-4)***

Warren Wiersbe lists five sins of ministry that will destroy the work of the church:

- (1) Carelessness
- (2) Shallowness
- (3) Covetousness
- (4) Laziness
- (5) Selfishness

***- Peter teaches on Christian leadership in 1 Peter 5:1-11 - The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away. Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble." Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.***

***- Discipline #6 (v36-38) - Loving one another!***

Observe the sweetness of fellowship: *Kneeling, praying, kissing, weeping, and accompanying Paul to the ship.*