

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you talk about God's word and Pastor Brian's message with friends and family. You of course can use your own questions, but we'd like to give you this tool to encourage Biblical fellowship and discipleship in your circle of relationships. We hope you are well and discovering new ways to relate to God and His Word.

"SO LONG, FAREWELL..." | ACTS 20: 17-38 | PASTOR BRIAN

WARM-UP QUESTION:

What's your favorite good-bye scene in a movie or tv show?

"Past Ministry" - (Acts 20: 17-21)

Paul reminds them repentance from sins and faith in Jesus go together. What are good explanations of repentance? Faith? Their connection? Paul reminds them repentance from sins and faith in Jesus go together. What are good explanations of repentance? Faith? Their connection?

"Present Concerns and Future Dangers " - (Acts 20: 22-31)

The Holy Spirit and Paul both warn of dangerous people and situations. What are effective ways of warning others in our society today? Ineffective ways of warning others?

"Upward Hope " - (Acts 20: 32-38)

At this time of leaving, Paul and his church want to bless and pray for each other. What are ways you have been blessed by people at a good-bye? How would you like to bless others at a time of leaving?

REFLECTION QUESTION:

Paul reminds the Ephesians a few times of how what he said and how he lived went together. That integrity was a powerful part of his ministry. How is your integrity lately? What do you need to change to narrow your "integrity gap"?

So Long, Farewell sound of music

I. Slide1 **Announce:**

- A. Slide2-6 Lar/AL: Ladies Xmas. Giving Tree. Xmas Eve Service. Sun Night Prayer.
- B. Slide7 New Wed Night Series - join me this Wed night as I kick off our new *Wed night series* that will lead us right up unto Christmas.
- C. Prayer:

II. Slide8 **Intro:**

- A. The great philosopher *Winnie the Pooh* said, *How lucky I am to have something, that makes saying goodbye so hard.*
- B. What was your saddest goodbye? Most tearful?
 1. This was *a very meaningful goodbye* by **Paul** to his friends in **Ephesus**.
 2. **Relationships** are so important & so beautiful. Paul spent the most time in 2 cities: **Corinth & Ephesus**. **Corinth** (pretty difficult dealing w/problems) **Ephesus** (pretty awesome here for 3 years).
 3. When Paul signs off in Romans 16 he *opens his photo album* & mentions **33 people** by name. Giving intimate detail of their family relationships & christian service.
 - a) **24** were from **Rome** (17 men, 7 women). **9** were w/Paul in **Corinth** (8 men, 1 woman)
 - b) *They were of diff Ranks: 2* were of royalty, **5** were common slave names. *They were of different Races: Jew & Gentile*, only **2** races the bible acknowledges (bible doesn't draw any distinction by skin color). *They were of different Genders: 8-10* were women.
 - c) *Different ranks, different races, & different genders...1 Church!*
- C. Slide9 **Title: So Long, Farewell** - This is the **only speech** in Acts which is addressed to a **Christian audience**. Also Ephesus became *the center of world Christianity* for the next 200 years.
 1. **Paul** wrote **1 Cor** from **Ephesus**. **Timothy** succeeded Paul in **Ephesus**. **Paul** wrote **1 & 2 Timothy** to him while he was in **Ephesus**.

The apostle **John** took up residence in **Ephesus** & wrote **1,2,3 John as well as his gospel** there.

a) He is going to review with them **his past ministry, his present concerns, & his future dangers.**

III. Slide10 **PAST MINISTRY (17-21)**

A. He reminds them of his **conduct, style** of ministry, & **devotion** while among them.

B. (20) **Public & Private** – **preaching** is the easy part...it's **living it** that makes ministry *real, practical, sympathetic, & alive.*

1. Unlike the pastor who **preaches cream, but lives skim milk.**

C. (21) Do you see **2 things** in vs.21 that are important to Paul for preaching?

Repentance & Faith must go together to complete each other like a **door** & its **post**.¹

1. **Repentance** = turning from sin. **Faith** = trusting Christ for salvation.

a) **Or, Let go of sin and Lay hold of Christ.**

b) **Patrick Morley** writes that **the church's integrity problem** is in the misconception, "*that we can add Christ to our lives, but not subtract sin. It is a change in belief without a change in behavior.*"

IV. Slide11 **PRESENT CONCERNS (22-27)**

A. **The whole counsel of God** - *The positive & the negative. The soothing & the corrective. The easy things & the hard things.*

1. Slide12a-f Paul gave Timothy more detail in 2 Tim.3:16,17, **All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching** (to teach us what's right), **for reproof** (to show us what's wrong), **for correction** (to correct us how to be right), **and for training in righteousness** (to instruct us how to stay right), **17 that the man of God may be complete** (to complete us for eternity), **equipped for every good work** (to equip us to be thoroughly-adequately-super-equipped).

2. Paul, **by lip & by life** proclaimed **the whole counsel of God.**

¹ From Best of Spurgeon; Acts 20:21

- a) Paul shared **all possible truth** with **all possible people** in **all possible ways**.
- b) He taught the **whole gospel** to the **whole city** with his **whole strength**.

V. Slide13a **FUTURE DANGERS (28-31)**

- A. To sum up Paul's speech, *I've done all I can for you. Now it's up to you!*
- B. (28) This is a *scriptural pattern* that a minister must **pay careful attention to himself and to all the flock of God**.
 - 1. **Spiritual health today** is no guarantee of spiritual health **tomorrow**.
 - a) We need to **consciously & consistently** sustain the *character traits* that foster **holiness**.
- C. **The Ephesian Leaders**: called **elders** (17), **overseers** (28a), & **shepherds** (28b).
 - 1. I like **shepherd/pastor** the best as it describes our **role**. **We are shepherds of God's sheep, called to tend, feed, & protect them.**
 - 2. **Pastors** must remember their people are **the flocks of God**, which **He bought w/His own blood** (shows how special/important they are).
- D. **Slide13b (29,30) Fierce wolves will come in...and from among yourselves - Can enemies from **w/in** cause as much damage to a church as the enemies from **w/o**? *I think even worse.* [both these examples are from some years ago]

 - 1. **From without** - an Evangelist. Wanted to start a ministry w/us...I said no (discernment). **Clue #1**, put all other ministries down & we're the best. **Clue #2**, prided himself on his boldness, how much he shares, how much he knows, how many he saves weekly. **I finally asked him to leave.** **Whenever I found out what church he went to I'd call the pastor & warn of this wolf.** Years later just about destroyed a family from here.
 - 2. **From within** - In early 2000's there was a movement in the church called **the Emergent Church**. To some it was just exploring diff worship styles & aesthetics like adding: candles, incense, art, or being relevant. Some stepped off the deep end with it. **2 ladies from our church went to a 1 day Conf, & came back on a crusade to ferret out anything that smelt like it.** They also had the buzz words to listen for & a list of 30-40 pastor/church leaders names (if ever quoted...they were **Emergent** for sure). **Thus we****

were marked by them (yep we had lights down during worship. yes I quoted a few on their list). They were viscous.

VI. Slide14 UPWARD HOPE (32-38)

- A. (32) What a beautiful benediction. He calls them to look *upward*.
1. He *commends* them to **God & the word of His grace**.
 2. Which would **build them up & give them their full inheritance** as members of the Christian community.
- B. (35) It is better to **give** than receive. *Paul drops us a flower from the Masters speech*
1. Why is it better to **give** than receive? - It is more blessed because:
It is more God-like (gave His Son). *It is more fruitful* (give now, receive later).
- C. (36-38) How sweet the friendship.
1. It takes **a minute** to say hello **and forever** to say goodbye.
- D. Hear these words if you are a *shepherd/shepherdess* of a family, a small community group, a Calvary Kids class... **Slide15**
1. Richard Baxter in his book *The Reformed Pastor* (1656) wrote, *Oh then, let us hear these arguments of Christ, whenever we feel ourselves grow dull and careless: Did I die for them, and wilt not though look after them? Were they worth my blood and are they not worth the labor? Did I come down from heaven to earth, to seek and to save that which was lost; and wilt though not go to the next door or Street or village to seek them?*
- E. **Slide16a** Is *remembering names* difficult for you? [by Chuck Swindoll] (Paul 33 names)
- F. We often excuse it by saying, *I'm not good at remembering names*. We have **believed something that isn't true**. The fact is...**you can** remember names.
1. The secret lies in that very brief period of time we stand face to face with another person - in fact, **the most important person in your life at that moment**. You see, that momentary encounter has been *directed by God*. He has arranged two lives so that they cross at His prescribed time - so

you can be sure that the meeting is significant. So is the name!

How you fit the name with the face - and cement both together in your memory bank - is of crucial importance.

2. Remind yourself at each introduction and handshake: This person is **important** (because he or she is). **God** has arranged our meeting (because He has).

G. **3 steps** are involved in the process of *cementing a name and the face* into the mind:

1. **Slide16b Impression**. Allow the name to make an impression - a dent - on your mind. Do this by being sure you have heard the name correctly. Repeat it. If necessary, spell it to the person, asking if that is the correct spelling. As you shake hands and talk for a few moments, picture the name in your mind. Secure the exact pronunciation.
2. **Association**. Here's where the fun comes. Think of an association you can link with the name. Visualize the name and think of something that **sounds** like it **or rhymes** with it. The crazier the better.
3. **Repetition**. As you talk together, use the person's name in the conversation. You might introduce the individual to others in the group, and again distinctly repeat the name.

H. Remember, This person is **important** and **God** has arranged your meeting.