



BIBLE STUDY

November 28th 2021

Prayer Points

1. Pray for the family of Sir David Amess following the recent funeral. Think of those who have lost loved ones in recent times and pray them and their families.
2. Pray for those countries struggling with the recent rise in COVID cases. Pray for those in the poorest of places like Chad and Nepal, who are struggling to access good affordable health care.
3. Pray for the effective training of 5,000 workers at BMS's partner Biglife going to West Bengal, India to preach the gospel and plant churches. Praise God for their encouragement of women disciple-makers.

These Study Guides accompany the weekly teaching at our Sunday morning services and are for use in Connect Groups and personal study.

If you would like to join a Connect Group, please contact the church office 01424 730001

The Gospel and Perseverance: Gods and the Gospel Acts 20:17-38

The book of Acts is full of powerful happenings and excitement as the church was birthed and began to take the good news of Jesus around the world. While they experienced great happenings they were also encountering problems and puzzles – over leadership, money, ethnic divisions, serving the poor and persecution from the authorities.

The early church was never trouble free. That's why it is encouraging to know in the midst of many challenges the church was able to take the gospel forward.

Paul is in a hurry! When reading Luke's account of Paul's missions there is a sense of haste everywhere. However, if we look at a map of the time as we read the scripture, 'haste' becomes a relative term, especially if we take into account the transport available. In verse 20:16 we note that Paul wanted to reach Jerusalem in time for Pentecost. He sailed past Ephesus then summoned the Church leaders from Ephesus [Vv. 17] to meet him at Miletus [aprox. 50 miles in a straight line]. When they met, Paul extolled them to keep their faith whilst also saying that they probably wouldn't meet again. He explained that the Holy Spirit was warning him of hardship and danger to come [Vv. 23]. Luke doesn't record their response.

Paul then said something strange; 'I am innocent of the blood of any of you' [Vv. 26] He then gave them a blessing [Vv. 28] and a warning [Vv. 29-31] but that wasn't the end as he gave a further blessing and then told them [Vv. 33-34] that he had financed himself and his co-missionaries through hard work before concluding with a prayer. The leaders then wept and grieved 'that they would never see his face again' [Compare that with Matt. 26:20-30 and Luke 20:14ff]

Read Acts 20:17-38

1. People are often recommended to read Luke's Gospel and then Acts as an introduction to the Bible, 'because they are most like modern literature and easy to understand'. How easy was it to understand today's reading? What did you find confusing?

2. Many Bibles have a map showing part of the Middle East covered in Paul's travels. Go back through the last couple of chapters and see if you can find the places mentioned in the text on the maps.

A 'good' day's march would be 20 miles and a day's sailing about 100 miles [coastal hugging]. Just for fun, see if you can work out how many days travel were involved in any one journey. [Tip: a piece of cotton would be helpful].

3. On the journey of your life, what stands out as to where you have been, where you are now or where you might go next?

4. What encouragement would you have gained from listening to this address from Paul? It is a farewell speech granted, but there are other aspects to be learned.. How many blessings are there and how many warnings are there in this passage?

5. When we hear in the media of a terrorist attack, there is often an accompanying message [video] from the perpetrator. Taking just this passage, what do you think a non Christian would make of it if presented in the same way today?

6. What do you think Paul meant when he said; 'You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you . . .' [Vv. 20]? Is there 'unhelpful' preaching? Discuss.

7. Why, given the warnings by the Spirit [Vv. 22], do you think Paul continued his journey to Jerusalem? Would you have done the same? What do you think it means in v14 when it says 'May the Lord's will be done'? Read Mark 14:35-36

8. Who do you think are 'the savage wolves' Paul mentions? Are there any that we should be mindful of today? How can we avoid their threats? How can we recognise them?