



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V28 N38 September 20, 2026

UNHINDERED

“Faith Along the Way”

Acts 20:1-16

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Church

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

“And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.”

Acts 2:44-47



Q?

How did Eutychus' fall affect the church at Troas?

Paul's collection for the poor saints in Jerusalem provides an important window into his theology of the church, biblical community, and the gospel. Although the collection addressed a genuine material need, Paul understood it as far more than an act of charity. It was a tangible expression of the unity of Jewish and Gentile believers in Christ and a practical demonstration of the transforming power of the gospel.

Paul's concern for the poor had roots in his earliest relationship with the Jerusalem apostles. At the Jerusalem meeting, they urged him to remember the poor, a responsibility Paul says he was eager to fulfill (Gal 2:10). The collection he later organized among the Gentile churches in Galatia, Macedonia, and Achaia gave concrete expression to that commitment. In 1 Corinthians 16:1-4, Paul instructs the Corinthians to set aside money regularly and proportionately for the saints in Jerusalem. The organized nature of the collection demonstrates that caring for fellow believers was an integral part of the life of the churches.

In 2 Corinthians 8-9, Paul gives the collection its deepest theological interpretation. He points to the Macedonians, who gave generously despite their poverty, and grounds their generosity in the grace of God. Most significantly, he appeals to Christ himself: “Though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor” (2 Cor. 8:9). Christian giving is therefore an expression of participation in the self-giving pattern of Christ. Grace received becomes grace expressed.

Paul also presents the collection as an expression of equality and mutuality within the body of Christ (2 Cor. 8:13-15). The

goal is not simply the relief of poverty but the sharing of resources among members of one spiritual family. He takes elaborate precautions concerning the administration of the funds (2 Cor. 8:16-24), demonstrating that Christian stewardship requires both generosity and integrity.

The collection's greatest theological significance appears in Romans 15:25-28. Paul explains that the Gentiles have shared in the spiritual blessings that came through Israel and therefore have an obligation to share their material blessings with the Jewish believers in Jerusalem. The collection thus embodies Paul's theology of salvation history: Gentiles have been incorporated into God's people through Israel's Messiah, and their gratitude is expressed through concrete material fellowship.

Finally, Acts 24:17 confirms that Paul did, in fact, bring “alms and offerings” to Jerusalem. The collection therefore represents the gospel in visible form — Christ's grace producing generosity, Gentile believers embracing their Jewish brothers and sisters, and the one people of God expressing their unity through sacrificial fellowship.

Paul's collection for the poor is reminiscent of the early disciples' expression of biblical community. According to Acts 2:44-45, “And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.”

Read Acts 20:1-16

1 After the uproar ceased, Paul sent for the disciples, and after encouraging them, he said farewell and departed for Macedonia. 2 When he had gone through those regions and had given them much encouragement, he came to Greece. 3 There he spent three months, and when a plot was made against him by the Jews as he was about to set sail for Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia. 4 Sopater the Berean, son of Pyrrhus, accompanied him; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy; and the Asians, Tychicus and Trophimus. 5 These went on ahead and were waiting for us at Troas, 6 but we sailed away from Philippi after the days of Unleavened Bread, and in five days we came to them at Troas, where we stayed for seven days.

7 On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the next day, and he prolonged his speech until midnight. 8 There were many lamps in the upper room where we were gathered. 9 And a young man named Eutychus, sitting at the window, sank into a deep sleep as Paul talked still longer. And being overcome by sleep, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead. 10 But Paul went down and bent over him, and taking him in his arms, said, "Do not be alarmed, for his life is in him." 11 And when Paul had gone up and had broken bread and eaten, he conversed with them a long while, until daybreak, and so departed. 12 And they took the youth away alive, and were not a little comforted.

13 But going ahead to the ship, we set sail for Assos, intending to take Paul aboard there, for so he had arranged, intending himself to go by land. 14 And when he met us at Assos, we took him on board and went to Mitylene. 15 And sailing from there we came the following day opposite Chios; the next day we touched at Samos; and the day after that we went to Miletus. 16 For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he might not have to spend time in Asia, for he was hastening to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost.

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Underline "Macedonia" in vv. 1, 3 and "Greece" in v. 2.
- Underline "three months" in v. 3.
- Circle proper names in v. 4.
- Circle "us" in v. 5 and "we" in vv. 6, 7, 8, 13, 14, 15.
- Bracket "first day of the week" in v. 7.
- Circle "break bread" in v. 7.
- Box "But" indicating *contrast* in v. 10.
- Highlight "his life is in him" in v. 10.
- Box "so that" indicating *purpose* in v. 16.
- Bracket "day of Pentecost" in v. 16.

What one word would you use to describe the **TONE** of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What one thing do you not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the **THEME** of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____."



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. What “uproar,” *where*?
2. To whom does “them” (v. 2) refer? Who did Paul encourage in Macedonia?
3. Rather than set sail for Syria from Achaia, Paul decided to return through Macedonia (v. 3). Explain why.
4. A number of men from various places returned with Paul. *Why* from various places and *why* did they return with him?
5. Paul’s traveling companions “went on ahead” (v. 5), but Paul delayed setting sail for Troas from Philippi. Explain why.
6. Describe the *who*, *when*, and *why* of the gathering described in verse 7.
7. Explain the *contrast* (“But”) introduced in v. 10.
8. What makes you think that Eutychus died from his fall or that he didn’t?
9. Why did Paul intend to sail past Ephesus on his way to Jerusalem?
10. **Discussion:** Embedded in Paul’s travel narrative is the story of Eutychus. Talk about how that incident affected the church in Troas and how similar incidents affect the church today.

Commentary On The Text

Acts 20:1-16 is a travelogue of sorts, documenting Paul's journey from Ephesus through Macedonia and Achaia, and back through Macedonia to Philippi where he set sail for Troas (vv. 1-6). It then documents his journey from Troas to Miletus, part by land and part by sea, on his way to Jerusalem (vv. 13-17).

The apostle had a twofold ministry that included leaving newly planted churches in his wake and later revisiting them to give them encouragement. And so, inserted in the middle of the travelogue, Luke gives his eyewitness account of meeting with the church in Troas on the first day of the week "to break bread" (v. 7), along with his account of a rather bizarre incident involving Eutychus (vv. 7-12), which left the congregation "not a little comforted" (v. 12).

According to one author: "Acts 20:1-12 emphasizes the thoroughness of Paul's efforts in encouraging and admonishing the churches. The beginning of the section twice refers to Paul 'encouraging' the churches (using *parakaleō*; 20:1, 2). The general statement in v. 2 about Paul's activity in Macedonia and Greece stresses that he encouraged the churches extensively (literally, 'with much discourse'). This summary is developed in the scene at Troas, which stresses both at the beginning and end the extensiveness of Paul's address, prolonged first to midnight (20:7) and then to dawn (20:11). The scene ends with the statement that the believers 'were greatly encouraged' or 'comforted'" (Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, vol. 2, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 245).

Paul's strong desire to return to Jerusalem by Pentecost (v. 16) pertained to the offering he had collected for the Jewish saints there. Paul was occupied with that collection during the period covered by verses 1-6. One commentator explains: "A major concern of Paul during this period was his collection for the Jerusalem Christians. All of his epistles written during the course of this third missionary period mention this project . . . Paul already had participated in a relief offering to the mother congregation from the Antioch church (Acts 11:27-30). Now, toward the end of his ministry in Asia, Macedonia, and Greece, Paul determined to put together a major offering from his Gentile churches for the church in Jerusalem. Not only was it to meet a genuine need, but it also was a graphic way of demonstrating the unity in Christ between his Gentile converts and their Jewish Christian brothers and sisters in Jerusalem" (John B. Polhill, *Acts*, NAC, 415).

Acts 20:3b-4 should be viewed in light of that collection. Paul's travelling companions listed in verse 4 served as representatives of the churches that participated in the collection. "In discussing 'the collection

for the saints' in 1 Cor. 16:1-4, Paul had noted that it would be accompanied by official representative from the churches. Their presence would give safety from robbery and also would provide a public guarantee of Paul's integrity in handling the funds. The men listed here (Acts 20:4) as accompanying Paul represent all the areas of his missionary work (*ESV Study Bible*, note on Ac 20:4). After a three-month stay in Corinth, Paul left when the Jews made a plot against him; instead of setting sail from there, he returned by land through Macedonia to Philippi. From there his companions went on ahead to Troas while he stayed in Philippi to celebrate Passover and the week-long Feast of Unleavened Bread, which Paul had hoped to celebrate in Jerusalem. Now his goal was to reach Jerusalem by Pentecost fifty days later.

Verses 7-12 contain the Eutychus story. While Paul and his travelling companions are in Troas, they attend the church there meeting on the first day of the week "to break bread" (v. 7). Paul preaches until midnight when a young man named Eutychus who was seated in an open third-floor window falls out of it. The congregants believe he has died from his fall—"was taken up dead" (v. 9). But Paul rushed to the young man, took him in his arms and reassured the church saying, "his life is in him" or as many versions translate, "he is still alive" (GNT, NASB, NET); cf. "he's alive" (NIV, NLT). Whether dead or not, the church was encouraged and comforted by God's gracious provision for the young man. Afterward, it seems the service went on as if nothing had happened. The believers ate a meal together, and Paul's teaching continued until daybreak.

Verses 13-16 document Paul's voyage from Troas to Miletus. "The journey from Troas to Miletus is given with exceptional detail. It seems to have taken about five days' sailing time, with each port given representing a day's journey. They evidently put into port each night. The winds usually died during the night, and the rocky coastal area was more favorable to day-time sailing" (Polhill, 4:20-21). Paul wanted to reach Jerusalem by Pentecost, so rather than stop by Ephesus, he sent for the elders (v. 17). "The Aegean crossing had taken five days, Paul and his companions had remained at Troas seven days, the trip along the western coast of Asia Minor would have taken at least another ten days, they had yet to sail across the Mediterranean and then travel by land from Caesarea up to Jerusalem. So Paul was content to sail past Ephesus" (Richard N. Longenecker, "The Acts of the Apostles," in *John-Acts*, vol. 9, EBC, 510).

Word Studies/Notes

v. 1 Macedonia, Greece Macedonia is located in the northern region of ancient Greece (major cities include Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea). Greece refers here to Achaia, which is located in the southern region of ancient Greece. Major cities include Corinth and Athens). "Greece is the popular title for the Rom. Province of Achaia (cf. 18:12). Luke prefers the popular territorial names; Paul prefers the Rom. Provincial names (cf. Rom 15:26; 1 Cor 16:15; 2 Cor 1:1; 9:2)" (Richard N. Longenecker, "The Acts of the Apostles," in *John-Acts*, vol. 9, EBC, 508). "In popular usage the term translated 'Greece' here could also refer to the Roman province officially known as Achaia" (NET Bible, 7tn, note on Ac 20:2).

v. 3 three months "During the apostle's **three-month** stay in Achaia, he wrote Romans (cf. Rom. 15:23-16:2) from Corinth" (Stanley D. Toussaint, "Acts," in the *Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, 412). Paul wrote 1 Corinthians before leaving Ephesus (early spring A.D. 56); he wrote 2 Corinthians from Macedonia (Sept/Oct A.D. 56). Paul actually wrote at least four letters to the Corinthians, the two canonical letters and two others—a previous letter mentioned in 1 Corinthians 5:9 and a tearful, severe letter mentioned in 2 Corinthians 2:3-4.

v. 4 Sopater, Aristarchus . . . "The long list of travelling companions given in v. 4 is best seen as the names of the delegates from the Gentile churches who joined Paul both for protection and as official representative of the churches . . . The list in v. 4 would indicate that there was representation from each of the major areas where Paul had established churches. Sopater, Aristarchus, and Secundus came from the Macedonian churches. Gaius and Timothy represented the churches of southern Galatia. Tychicus and Trophimus were the delegates from the churches of Asia" (John B. Polhill, *Acts*, NAC, 416).

vv. 5, 6 us, we "At this point the 'we' narrative resumes. The first-person narration last occurred in the account of Paul's Philippian ministry (16:17), and this may indicate that Luke had stayed behind in Philippi and remained ministering there until this point" (Polhill, 416-17).

v. 7 first day of the week "Luke shows no embarrassment at presupposing the existence of a church at Troas whose founding he has not narrated (but cf. II Cor. 2:12) . . . This is the first clear indication that Christians had begun to meet on the Sunday

(cf. I Cor. 16:2; Rev. 1:10)" (James D. G. Dunn, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 268). The worship service "consisted the breaking of bread (the Lord's Supper) and preaching. That the Lord's Supper was accompanied by a larger fellowship meal may be indicated by the reference to their 'eating' in v. 11 (cf. 1 Cor 11:20f.)" (Polhill, 418).

v. 7 break bread This refers to the Lord's Supper, which was likely observed in connection with a fellowship meal; cf. "when Paul had gone up and had broken bread *and eaten . . .*" (v. 11).

v. 10 his life is in him Cf. "he is still alive" (NET, NASB, GNT); "he's alive" (NIV). While Eutychus is assumed to be dead as a result of his fall—by the text as well as many commentators—that may not have been the case. "In the Eutychus story, the passive verb 'was taken up' implies an actor, a group of Christians who have rushed down to find Eutychus. 'He was taken up dead' can easily be understood as their judgment about Eutychus' condition, an example of free indirect discourse rather than a statement of the omniscient narrator [Luke]. The following statement of Paul, 'His life is in him' (rather than 'His life has returned to him'; cf. 1 Kings 17:21=3 Kgdms. 17:21) also permit this view. The narrator has not taken a clear stand on whether Eutychus was dead. This ambiguity may have value as a reflection of believing experience. Believers may recall experiences of discovering life when only death was apparent, but they seldom really know what happened to cause this change, or how it happened" (Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, vol. 2, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 249).



APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THIS PASSAGE

God's gracious provision for individual members of his church provides comfort and encouragement to the entire congregation.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The "Living Questions" are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does the author of this passage want me to *know*?
2. What does the author of this passage want me to *do*?
3. What does the author of this passage want me to *be*?



PARENT CONNECTION

In many ways, Paul parented the early church. He taught, led, disciplined, and modeled a Christlike walk for the new believers. In 1 Thessalonians 5:11, he wrote, "Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing." We see this in action throughout Acts 20. Paul encouraged while speaking truth. He didn't condone misaligned behavior or speech. He wasn't trying to be their buddies. He didn't excuse cultural social structure or influence. Paul encouraged while speaking truth—two factors that must work in tandem. My first question for you is: are you encouraging your kids? Think through yesterday. When and how did you encourage them? Were you a taskmaster instead? Were you too busy sending them off so you could fold laundry or make dinner? Some days I do this well and others I fall into bed thinking *I did nothing to encourage my kids today, I just barked orders all evening*. My second question is: did your encouragement point them to biblical truth? Did you help your child see where suffering builds perseverance which develops character resulting in hope (Romans 5:3-5)? Did you encourage your children to challenge themselves building grit, determination, and a full surrender and trust in the Lord's faithfulness? Did you share a personal story of learning higher math or practicing the tuba that identified with their struggle but revealed the greatness of God? Encouragement isn't just saying, "Good job, buddy!" True encouragement takes their hand and leads your child to the foot of the

What Does The Bible Say?

Read Acts 20:1-16.

1. How long did Paul speak in Troas?
2. What happened to Eutychus?
3. How did Paul bring him back to life?

What Do You Think?

Everywhere Paul went he encouraged others. Why did the believers need to be encouraged?

What Do You Do?

Have you ever been tired while listening to a sermon? What are some ways you can help yourself stay awake? Practice these on Sunday morning.

CORE COMPETENCY: Biblical Community

I spend time with other Christians to help with God's work.

MEMORY VERSE: Lamentations 3:22-23

"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness."

KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRAL Kids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- ☐ I completed my Bible Study
- ☐ I memorized this week's verse
- ☐ I brought my Bible to church
- ☐ I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME

GRADE

PARENT SIGNATURE

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)
I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)
I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)
I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)
I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)
I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)
I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)
I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)
I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)
I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)
I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)
I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)
I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)
I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)
I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)
I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)
I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)
I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)
I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)
I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)
I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)
I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)
I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)
I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)
I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)
I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)
I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)
I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)
I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)
I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)
I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

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Stephanie Thomas (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have five children: Elijah, Levi, Bo, Ella and Simon. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years, has been on staff since 2014, and now serves as Children's Minister.

The Scrolls Bible Study is a spiritual growth resource of Central Bible Church, Fort Worth, Texas.

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**CENTRAL
BIBLE CHURCH**

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OUR MISSION
Making God known by making disciples who are changed by God to change their world.