Acts Chapter 20 Verse 1

* What the disciples had just witnessed, *no doubt*, was intimidating. Virtually the entire huge city had come together and shouted in protest *(for two solid hours)* to Paul and his preaching. And so, I love what it says here. ***Paul called the disciples together and embraced them.*** Now in the Greek that word embrace doesn’t necessarily mean *3-second man-hug!* HA! The word has more depth than that. It means to *“salute”* them. It is a term of honor and the *embrace* side of the definition gives **individuality** to it. Paul ***greeted, comforted, encouraged***….***he saluted each one of them.***
* Do you know how much people have ***need*** of encouragement and kindness? **It’s everything we lost!** Can you imagine what it was like for Adam to walk with God in the cool of the day? Do you think any sentence came out of the mouth of God that wasn’t ***reassuring and encouraging and strengthening*** towards man? If that’s the case, (and we can be sure it was), then ***man’s ears were designed to receive love, kindness, encouragement and strengthening.*** But now, our nature, what we see on the world scene, what we experience…there is so little of that. *(It’s like we’re made to breathe but can’t ever get a breath. Made to eat but always on the brink of starvation.)*
* Folks, may I just say, if you’re a Christian today and you have not yet made it a habit to ***embrace the disciples***, **you’re “Christianing” wrong.** It is a JOY to salute those around you. To build them up. To strengthen them. Joy is found there! That is precisely what God is like! If you’re not that way then I would encourage you to draw closer to the Lord.
* Joshua 1:9 says, *“Be strong. Be courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go!”* Isaiah 41:10 says, *“Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand!”* If you are hanging out with a God that encourages you like that, you will have **no choice** but to be encouraged and encouraged folks build strength in others! Encouraged folks build others period! So hang out with Jesus a little more closely, please! ***Oh how we need encouragement and strengthening!***
* Not good enough for you to take inventory and make a change ***right now?***  **Today?** ***God has commanded that of you.*** He expects that of you! 1 Thessalonians 5:11, *“Therefore encourage one another and build each other up.”* 2 Corinthians 1:3-4, *“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.”* Every person in here needs, **number 1 need**…to be comforted, strengthened, loved…***embraced.*** ***It’s perhaps the greatest need because it was our greatest loss when sin entered the world…***

Acts Chapter 20 Verses 2 – 5a

* It appears that Paul ***picked up Luke again***, perhaps in Macedonia. Do you think, *(well definitely not)*, but wouldn’t it be funny if Luke scheduled an Uber and Paul pulled up! HA! Ok, dumb thought but this is how it plays out in my head…I know, I’m crazy.
* When I was a kid we were taught **NOT** to get into cars with strangers! ***Now we pay to do it!*** HA!! Actually, it’s quite amazing the day and age we live in! We push a *virtual* button on the glass surface of a miniature super computer in our pocket and minutes later we have a ride anywhere…that’s incredible to think about. You know what else is ***remarkable!?*** **Whiteboards!** HA…ooook, let’s move on!

Acts Chapter 20 Verses 5 – 7

* Now that’s a telling verse! ***The disciples came together on the “first day of the week.”*** What day is that? That is Sunday! Why does this matter? Because there are folks that will tell you that if you worship on Sunday then you **cannot** be, must not be worshipping God, you must be worshipping Satan because Sunday is named after the Sun god which is a false deity, in fact, THE false deity…! **But that’s not reasonable.**
* Let’s connect with the first day of the week Biblically first. First, this verse. Pretty solid. Second, Jesus appeared to the gathered disciples in John Chapter 20 verse 19. Third, it was the first day of the week that Jesus rose from the grave. Fourth, in 1 Corinthians 16:1-2, Paul talks about *taking up a collection for the saints*…***on the first day of the week.*** Fifth…IT DOESN’T MATTER! HA!!
* Romans 14:5, *“One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each one be fully convinced in HIS OWN MIND!”* And then Colossians 2:16…so really, it makes zero difference at all, ***whatsoever***…it’s just a weak play by the enemy to divide the church and *pick off* prospective saints and ***the worst part of it all is that it works.***
* Now, what we should take as **solid doctrine** is that Paul preached until midnight! HA! Just kidding…but look at this…

Acts Chapter 20 Verse 8

* Why would Luke *inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit* include that? ***Because it is today as it was then.***  There were many that would mumble against the gatherings of the church and turn folks away with rumors and lies about what happened during those meetings. I love it when someone expects to come here and find the place *“churchy”* and *“stuffy” and “snooty”* and then they experience our mess of announcements and then my FANTASTIC JOKES! HA! Honestly though, I love that folks find that this place is just filled with regular people who are just like them but man we love the Lord and are a grateful, full-service bunch!!
* The church got all *kinds and sorts* of bad press then, and it does still today…maybe even worse today because you can go on Google or Yelp or Facebook and actually **rate the church!!** Crazy! ***The church should be able to go on there and rate YOU!*** **HA!!** And so they would light up the place! Candles everywhere, in every window so that anyone passing by could see clearly what was going on…and Paul was preaching the Word!

Acts Chapter 20 Verse 9

* **This verse will preach!!** (You ever find a verse you’re just thankful for!? HA! Just kidding!) First, let me just say that Eutychus gets a lot of (undeserved in my opinion) bad press! These people would work all day…this is the first day of the week, *not the Sabbath*, so they would have worked all day and then come to attend church…and here’s the thing…**good on him for making it to church!** You who make it a point and a priority to come every Sunday and you ***huge crowd of crazies*** that come after work on Wednesday nights…GOOD ON YA! God is going to work miracles in your life! Just like what we are going to see here in Eutychus’ life…
* Second, if you can’t stay awake, hey, still come! Remember Samuel! 1 Samuel 3! God called to him ***when?*** ***When he was asleep!*** The Word does not return void, Isaiah 55:11! So even if you’re asleep, can’t make it through the sermon, God can and is speaking to you through His Word. Now if that is encouragement for you then unfortunately you’re probably not hearing it! HA! But man we come tired, beat down by the world, frustrated by the flesh…***COME anyway, consistently and ALWAYS!!*** Huge part of growth in your walk!!
* Now, if you are drowsy, may I suggest that **you should not sit in a third story open window!** HA! But there’s a lesson there as well…if you are susceptible to something…***steer clear!*** ***Take steps of wisdom that will enable you to make leaps of growth!!***

Acts Chapter 20 Verses 10 – 12

* I just love this scene as we close our time of study today. A brother falls down…grows drowsy in the service, drowsy in the time of instruction, and **falls**…and Paul doesn’t attack or come down on him, ***he goes down to him***…and **embraces** him. And that embrace…brings life. We see Paul embrace the disciples and we see Paul embrace the fallen…that is exactly what Jesus plans to do with us now and as we depart…