

THE CONTINUING ACTS OF THE CHRIST



Week Twenty-Three - Moving Forward In the Mission

A Note to the Parents/Teachers

Chapter 20 starts with a diverse group traveling with Paul from many different nations and ends with him giving a sad farewell to Ephesus, because he needs to travel on to Jerusalem (and then Rome and Spain). In between is a strange story seemingly out of nowhere, which is the story we'll focus on this week. If we look deeper, it's a story giving legitimacy to Paul's ministry and to the work Jesus is doing through him. The point is, God is moving His mission forward through Paul, the others who follow Jesus with him — and through you and I.

- **Big Idea:** God is faithful to move His mission forward so all nations know the Good News.

Starter

Evidence of Grace

- Ask kids to share ways they've seen God at work lately. Anything, big or small, which is good is from God. Take time to thank God together.

Discussion:

- Have you ever been in a race? Have you ever run a race you weren't prepared for? Were you ever tempted to quit in the middle of a race?

Sing Together

Story - from Acts 20

After things calmed down from the riot in Ephesus, Paul called the followers of Jesus together and encouraged them to keep sharing the good news. Then he left for Macedonia, encouraging believers along the way. Then he stayed in Greece for three months doing the same there. Then Syria, Troas, Philippi, etc. Paul was making his rounds to encourage followers of Jesus in all these towns because he knew he was getting ready to leave them.

Paul was on his way to Jerusalem for Pentecost, but from there he knew he needed to travel to Rome. After Rome, his plan would be to travel to Spain, his ultimate destination point. Why Spain, you ask? Because Spain (was known as Tarshish in Jonah's day) was the furthest nation they knew of at the time. It signified the ends of the earth. And Paul's mission from God was to bring the good news of Jesus to all of the nations — as far as God would allow him to go. Paul said, *"my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me — the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace."*

The believers traveling with Paul were from different nations and ethnicities. God truly had been working through Paul to bring people of all nations into His Kingdom! Unfortunately, this wasn't celebrated by everybody. Some people still wondered if the other nations should be brought into God's community or not. When Luke wrote the book of Acts, he knew this was the case, so he was very intentional to include a story in the middle of this chapter about something God did through Paul — so all who heard it would know that God was doing something through Paul and he really was on God's mission.

Here's what Luke wrote about:

One day while we were in Troas for a week, before Paul said goodbye to the Ephesian leaders, we met on a Sunday to worship and celebrate the Lord's Supper. Paul addressed the congregation. Since our plan was to leave first thing in the morning, Paul wanted to share as much as possible before we left them. So he talked way past midnight. We were meeting in a well-lit upper room. A young man named Eutychus was sitting on an open window sill. As Paul went on and on, Eutychus fell sound asleep and toppled out the third-story window! They ran down to check on him and he was dead.

Paul went down, stretched himself over him, and hugged him. "Do not worry," he said. "There's still life in him." Then Paul got up and served the Lord's Supper. He went on telling stories of the faith until dawn! On that note, they left — Paul going one way, the congregation another, and taking the boy with them — alive. They were all full of life themselves, because of what they had seen and heard.

This story showed that Paul was not doing these things in his own power and strength. He didn't have the ability to bring people back to life! Only God can do that. It also would have reminded people about the ways prophets of old did things through God's power — like how Elijah stretched himself over a young boy who died in 1 Kings 17 and prayed for God to give his life back, and He did! Like how Elisha did the same for another young boy in 2 Kings 4, and God saved him! Like how Peter had prayed for Tabitha to be brought back to life in Acts 9 and God did it! Like how Jesus had raised many from the dead, including himself, and is now the way for all of us to have resurrected life forever with him!

This is God's mission. To rescue us from sin and death when we follow Jesus into new life.

[Dialogue Questions - you may use some or all]

- ▶ Why did Paul want to travel to Jerusalem, then Rome, then all the way to Spain? What was important about his journey?
- ▶ What kinds of people were following Jesus when they heard the good news from Paul?
- ▶ Why do you think Paul talked for so long that night? Why do you think God allowed for that boy to fall out of the window?
- ▶ When God used Paul to bring Eutychus back to life, how does that remind you of Jesus?
- ▶ Paul was set on his mission, because it was God's mission He invited Paul to join. What mission has God given to you? How can you join Him in His mission?

Breakout Time

Pray:

God, thank you for rescuing us and giving us new life through Jesus. Fill us with your Spirit so we can join your work, in your power. Amen.

Craft:

- You can use the following coloring page
- You can discuss Acts 20:24 while creating a race baton using toilet paper rolls and lining it with crate paper or colored tissue paper like this:



BLESS Activity

This week, ask your family how you can practice the **Speak** rhythm.

Who can you share the good news of Jesus with this week? Maybe there is someone who you normally wouldn't spend time with that you can move toward with good news together with acts of kindness?

