

TEXT: Acts 20:7-12

TITLE: EUTYCHUS – A DIVINE OBJECT LESSON REGARDING RESURRECTION

**BIG IDEA:**

**YOU CAN'T SAY ENOUGH ABOUT THE MESSAGE OF THE GOSPEL WHICH FOCUSES ON THE POWER OF THE RESURRECTION**

**INTRODUCTION:**

You all remember the classic children's nursery rhyme:

*Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,  
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.  
All the king's horses and all the king's men  
Couldn't put Humpty together again.*

In our story from Acts this morning we have a divine object lesson to reinforce the power of the resurrection message which the Apostle Paul was proclaiming. We find the story of Eutychus who falls to his death and is brought back to life in miraculous fashion. What all the king's horses and all the king's men are unable to do, God easily accomplishes through His servant Paul. The story reminds us of the incident of **Christ raising up Lazarus** – providing the setting for those famous words of comfort and assurance:

*“I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die.” (John 11:25-26)*

We find the Apostle revisiting churches in various cities on what amounts to a farewell tour before he ends up at Jerusalem and ultimately at Rome. His goal is to encourage and strengthen the saints and reinforce the message of new life in Jesus Christ. He wants the disciples to remain strong in the faith and continue to advance the kingdom of God. He wants to warn them about temptations and difficulties that could throw them off track. He wants to reinforce his personal love and commitment to them in the fellowship of the gospel. He has a lot to say to the saints gathered together in this upper room in the city of Troas.

**YOU CAN'T SAY ENOUGH ABOUT THE MESSAGE OF THE GOSPEL WHICH FOCUSES ON THE POWER OF THE RESURRECTION**

Because I believe this incident is recorded with the purpose of communicating a spiritual object lesson to us today, I am going to take some more liberty with the passage in terms of symbolism than how I would normally exegete a text.

- Many lessons here also about the worship practices of the early church
- Many lessons here also about Paul's pastoral care for the early church – look at his great love for the believers; his tireless efforts at providing edification and strengthening; his indoctrination program to exalt the truth of God's Word

## **I. (:7-8) THE MESSAGE OF THE GOSPEL IS THAT LIGHT HAS COME INTO THE WORLD – THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE OBJECT LESSON**

### **A. (:7) Emphasis on Length of the Message**

#### **1. Calendar Shift to Meeting on the Lord's Day (instead of the Sabbath)**

*“And on the first day of the week,”*

Ἐν δὲ τῇ μιᾷ τῶν σαββάτων

**MacArthur:** Ellen G. White, who is responsible for starting 7<sup>th</sup> day eventism wrote this. Quoting "to us as to Israel the Sabbath is given for perpetual covenant. To those who receive his holy day, the Sabbath is a sign that God recognizes them as his chosen people." What she's saying there is that people that meet on the Sabbath are the chosen people; the others are not. "The sign or seal of God is revealed in the observance of the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath. The mark of the beast is the observance of the first day of the week."

But you know something; that is not scriptural. In Galatians, not only from the life of the church, they probably meant every other day, but the Lords' day was a special day. But in **Galatians 4:10**, Paul says to those Christians in Galatia, "*you observe days and months and times and years.*" In other words, you're still hung up on the Jewish Sabbath. I'm afraid that I have bestowed upon you labor in vain. If you really we're saved, you ought to be over that. That part of the old covenant is gone. In case that isn't convincing enough to show you the Sabbath is not anymore to be observed, listen to this one. **Colossians 2:16**. "*Let no man therefore judge you in food or in drink or in respect of a feast day or of the new moon or of a Sabbath day which are a shadow of things to come.*" Don't let anybody condemn you for what you eat or what you may drink or a feast you may or may not keep or a new moon or a Sabbath. Those things were shadows, when the reality came the shadow was gone.

**Boice:** This change is a proof of the resurrection. There are many evidences: the empty tomb, the grave clothes, the changed character of the disciples, and so on – all these and other historical facts are powerful evidences for the fact of the resurrection of Christ. But among these many evidences, there is the change of the day of worship to Sunday. Why would that happen? Particularly, why would that happen among Jews, who mostly made up the early Christian congregations and who were trained by centuries of tradition to worship on the seventh day? There is only one explanation -- Jesus rose from the dead on that day.

#### **2. Centrality of the Lord's Table – associated with Agape Love Feast**

*“when we were gathered together to break bread,”*

συνηγμένων ἡμῶν κλάσαι ἄρτον,

The word *synagogue* comes from the Greek verb "συνάγω" = gather and means place of concentration; a gathering together; an assembly

“to break bread” – combines both aspects of the agape meal and the special remembrance of the Lord's Table

Principal point of the believers getting together – not just some minor tacked-on ordinance – remember the Lord in His death and resurrection and fellowship together as they worship the Lord

People met at night because they had to work during each day – no weekends off for those who were slaves or servants; had to use their time wisely; not the leisure time that we enjoy today

**Barclay:** There is something very lovely about this simple picture. The impression is that of a family meeting together rather than of a modern church service. Is it possible that we have gained in dignity in our Church services at the expense of family atmosphere?

### 3. Context of Farewell Message

*“Paul began talking to them, intending to depart the next day,”*

ὁ Παῦλος διελέγετο αὐτοῖς μέλλων ἐξίέναι τῇ ἐπαύριον,

Waiting seven days in Troas to catch ship for the next part of his journey; already tired out from a five day journey at sea and preparing to depart on the next leg of his journey; but **made himself available** to speak from his heart to these dear believers

Must have been a very interested audience – taking this rare opportunity to hear the last words they might ever hear from the lips of the great apostle (turns out he might have been able to visit one more time)

Word for talking here, we get the word “*dialogue*” – some questions and answers and discussion perhaps as well; conduct a discussion; speak; preach

### 4. Communication Extended Because of Pastoral Concerns

*“and he prolonged his message until midnight.”*

παρέτεινέν τε τὸν λόγον μέχρι μεσονυκτίου.

Probably the longest sermon we have in the Bible – gets to midnight and it turns out that is just the halfway point of the message

People were hungry for the Word of God; not constrained by artificial time limits; you speak more than 30 minutes in our culture and people get antsy

**MacArthur:** And Paul, when he got there, didn't just say, well, a few nice little choice words. I've got to go. He continued his speech till midnight. Meetings weren't regulated by the clock, folks. They were regulated by the needs of the people, and their hunger for the Word. You see, in the early days, these people were hungry. They met for the Word. You know, **1 Peter 2:2** always hits me, and I get to thinking about this. It says, "*As babies, desire the pure milk of the Word that you may grow thereby.*" I have never in my life seen a baby that didn't like milk. That baby not only likes it; that baby wants it. Babies want milk. You'd have a very abnormal, sick baby that didn't want milk, but I've sure seen a lot of Christians that didn't seem to want teaching.

### **B. (:8) Emphasis on Light** associated with Revelation and Illumination

*“And there were many lamps in the upper room where we were gathered together.”*

ἦσαν δὲ λαμπάδες ἱκαναὶ ἐν τῷ ὑπερώῳ οὗ ἦμεν συνηγμένοι.

“*upper room*” – does not mean that churches have to meet in private homes in an upper room

Why did the Holy Spirit have Luke insert this reference?? Very interesting detail

Possibilities:

- Because Christians did not want to be accused of meeting off in the dark where they could be involved in immoral activities ?? Doubtful
- Because the smoke from these oil lamps would have been a contributing cause to Eutychus falling asleep – that seems to be part of it

**BlaiKlock:** The burning oil was the main reason for the deterioration of the atmosphere, most apparent higher in the room, where the unfortunate Eutychus sat in the window-alcove.

- Also because of the association of light with revelation and illumination

**John 1:6-13** *“There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him. He was not the Light, but he came to testify about the Light. There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.”*

**John 3:19-21** *“This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.”*

**Isaiah 9:2** *“The people who walk in darkness Will see a great light; Those who live in a dark land, The light will shine on them.”*

**Isaiah 50:10** *“Who is among you that fears the LORD, That obeys the voice of His servant, That walks in darkness and has no light? Let him trust in the name of the LORD and rely on his God.”*

We have been called to live as:

- Children of light  
**Ephesians 5:8** *“for you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light.”*
- Light of the world  
**Matt. 5:14-16** *“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do men light a lamp, and put it under the peck-measure, but on the lampstand; and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”*

## **II. (:9) THE MESSAGE OF THE GOSPEL IS THAT REJECTION OF THE LIGHT LEADS TO DEATH – THE CONDITION REQUIRING NEW LIFE**

*And there was a certain young man named Eutychus sitting on the window sill, sinking into a deep sleep; and as Paul kept on talking, he was overcome by sleep and fell down from the third floor, and was picked up dead.*

καθεζόμενος δέ τις νεανίας ὀνόματι Εὐτυχὸς ἐπὶ τῆς θυρίδος, καταφερόμενος ὕπνῳ βαθεῖ διαλεγομένου τοῦ Παύλου ἐπὶ πλεῖον, κατενεχθεὶς ἀπὸ τοῦ ὕπνου ἔπεσεν ἀπὸ τοῦ τριστέγου κάτω καὶ ἦρθη νεκρός.

Young man – probably around 8-14 years old when you look at the words used to describe him

Name Eutychus means “Fortunate” or “Lucky”—but we find God is sovereignly and providentially at work in the details of this incident

Perched on a good spot to get some air in a room that probably had become hot and stuffy – no screens – just an open window; up on the third floor; commendable to find him here after probably a long day of chores

Present tense of the verb indicates that he was in the process of trying to fight off nodding off; he would drift a little and then snap his head up and then drift back off; finally sleep wins out; he probably kept thinking, Surely Paul must be about ready to wrap this up ... but he kept on talking (maybe that is what some of you think about my sermons)

How can we be sure he was actually dead?? Diagnosis comes to us from Luke the physician who was physically present (resumption of the “we” passages in Acts – vv.5-6) and wrote this book of the Bible

Not saying anything in the text negative about Eutychus ... but certainly in a symbolic sense he stands for those who fail to take the opportunity to receive the light of God’s revelation and end up dead in their trespasses and sins – the state of physical death points to that more eternal reality of spiritual death – He is in desperate need of new life and salvation; nothing that he can contribute to gain this new life; it will have to be all the work of God

In our story, you can imagine the immediate outpouring of shock and grief and anguish on the part of the believers ... as the sermon is interrupted and they rush down the stairs and outside to see what has become of the young boy

Falling three flights will do tremendous damage; Illustration of one of our owners

Not the last time somebody fell asleep during a sermon

### **III. (:10) THE MESSAGE OF THE GOSPEL IS THAT GOD SAVES BY RAISING THE DEAD TO NEW LIFE – THE CONTACT WITH GOD THAT RESULTS IN NEW LIFE**

*But Paul went down and fell upon him and after embracing him, he said, "Do not be troubled, for his life is in him."*

καταβάς δὲ ὁ Παῦλος ἐπέπεσεν αὐτῷ καὶ συμπεριλαβὼν εἶπεν· μὴ θορυβεῖσθε, ἡ γὰρ ψυχὴ αὐτοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ ἐστίν.

Paul is merely the channel, the conduit for the power of God to flow through in this instance

A person needs that personal connection with God by grace through faith

**Book:** The parallel with Elijah and Elisha is strong (1 Kings 17:19-22; 2 Kings 4:34-35), with Paul bending over the boy's body. . . The power of God over life is reaffirmed.

Death does not extinguish the soul; the body is the tent we live in here on earth

### **IV. (:11-12) THE MESSAGE OF THE GOSPEL IS THAT OUR NEW LIFE SHOULD REVOLVE AROUND WORSHIP AND FELLOWSHIP AND EDIFICATION AND TESTIMONY – THE CELEBRATION AND COMFORT ASSOCIATED WITH NEW LIFE**

*And when he had gone back up, and had broken the bread and eaten, he talked with them a long while, until daybreak, and so departed. And they took away the boy alive, and were greatly comforted.*

ἀναβάς δὲ καὶ κλάσας τὸν ἄρτον καὶ γευσάμενος ἐφ' ἱκανόν τε ὁμιλήσας ἄχρι αὐγῆς, οὕτως ἐξῆλθεν. ἤγαγον δὲ τὸν παῖδα ζῶντα καὶ παρεκλήθησαν οὐ μετρίως.

Time around the Lord's Table should be one of celebration and worship and fellowship

Do you think Paul had the people's attention as he continued his message?

When did Paul get to sleep?? My food is to do the will of the Father . . .

### **CONCLUSION:**

What lessons do we take away from this short narrative, this remarkable miracle

**Ephes. 1:19** "and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe"

Same power that resuscitated Eutychus; same power that raised up Jesus Christ from the dead

Another picture is present for us here in this story of Eutychus as well. You could view this as the death of a believer followed by the restoration of fellowship that will occur when Christ returns – when we will all sit together and enjoy communion with our Lord around the marriage feast of the bridegroom with His bride.

So on different levels this object lesson speaks to us of the power of the resurrection and those words of assurance from our Lord that we mentioned at the beginning:

*“I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die.” (John 11:25-26)*

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### DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) How often should believers celebrate the Lord's Table?
- 2) How can we increase our hunger for the teaching ministry of the Word of God?
- 3) How does this passage argue against the theory of life being annihilated at the point of death?
- 4) How could Paul function here without any sleep?

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### QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

**MacArthur:** So in his mind he feels this is the last time he'll ever be in Eastern Mediterranean. He has some tremendous, tremendous roots there. Some beloved, beloved sons in the faith. And he knows in his own mind that the feeling is it's over, this is it, this is my last time, this is farewell, this is swan song and so forth. And so there's a feeling through this passage of finality. It's interesting that probably he did get back if very briefly. And that's due to the fact that he made the statement that he left Proflimus ill at Myledus. And since that didn't happen here, it must have happened at a later time and so we conclude that perhaps his Roman imprisonment was separated into two sections and in the middle he made another little trip near Asia Minor.

But for the most part, this is it. This is the wrap up on it. And you sense farewells and I suppose all of us know that when farewells come along there's kind of love, kind of rises to the top. And when we're saying goodbye for the last time to the people we really care about, all the little things sort of fade and just kind of love sort of rules. And maybe that's in a sense what happens here. Although I think it probably ruled in all the life with Paul, from the time of his conversion.

And so we see a series of goodbyes and a series of farewells all through Chapter 20 as Paul goes back toward Jerusalem. . . . But we see here six areas, just words. They don't really mean that the text is divided by God this way. It's a very poor outline in fact. Just some nails to hang your thoughts on. But there are six different things here that express Paul's love. His affection, his giving, his teaching, his persistence, his availability and his concern.

### **Dr. Brian Green: The Midnight Miracle**

This is one of the events on the final journey of the Apostle Paul. He was visiting particular places where he had previously seen the blessing of the Lord. Troas was an important seaport. God has the answer for every situation in life.

#### **1. (:7) The Remarkable Meeting**

Look at earlier instances in Acts of remarkable occurrences;

a. The Day = the first day of the week; first mention that the disciples came together on the first day of the week instead of the Jewish Sabbath; day of worship, celebration, remembrance, rest, rejoicing; based on the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ = beginning of a new week; we

remember the cross and the blood that was shed but we celebrate the resurrection; we serve a risen Savior; world wants Sunday to be just like any other day; it is a sad thing to steal God's day from Him;

b. The Details of this Memorable Meeting – the Lord's Table and a long sermon; both are very important; an encounter with Christ as we interact with the preaching of the Word; causes us to grow in grace; encourages us amidst the difficulties

c. The Duration of the Meeting – people holding torches of light; unashamed of the gospel; the longest sermon in the Bible; most of the people there did not have a day off; they were servants and would come in the evening because they were eager to hear the Word of God; do a series on the night occasions in the Bible and what transpired (Daniel 5; Paul visited by angel in prison; call goes forth "Behold the bridegroom comes to the chamber"; Judas going out when it was night; etc.)

d. The Distraction = the heart of the meeting –

## **2. The Recorded Miracle**

a. The Reason for this recorded miracle – between age of 8 and 14; know nothing else about him; probably a slave who had worked all day; kids will let you know if they don't want to listen, but grownups can sit there and fake it;

Illustration: wife speaking to the preacher after her husband had walked out in the middle of the sermon; Preacher remarks: "What was it I said that so offended your husband that he walked out in the middle of the sermon?" Wife responds: "Oh that was not it at all; he often walks in his sleep."

b. The Reaction – the shock in the group; great sorrow to the church; God can raise up someone from their sins right now

c. The Restoration – we have passed from death to life; from kingdom of Satan to kingdom of God; what happened in life of Eutychus after this? Dedicated as a witness;

## **3. Remembering the Memorable** – other references to Troas = very significant:

**Acts 16:8-9** Paul was going in the opposite direction; instead due to the Macedonian Call the gospel came to Europe – watershed moment – Place of Vision

**2 Cor. 2:12** – door opened; Place of Mission

**2 Tim. 4:13** – left certain things behind in Troas; maybe he was in a hurry; 3 symbolic things that were what Eutychus needed most to go on in the faith: