

Text: Ac 4-6

Proposition: The work of the ministry involves doing the next thing.

This afternoon we will zero in on one of the brief moments of focus in Luke's travelogue, Acts 21.4-6 and Paul's stop in Tyre.

So, let's read the text again, then we will make some brief comments.

Read Ac 21.4-6

The passage is an interlude in the life of this church. It is a moment of energy, giving it a boost for days to come.

Something of the same will happen any time there is a special event in a church. The routine will break with a week of special meetings or a special emphasis Sunday, or something like the funeral we conducted on Friday for our dear brother Norman.

Normally, we have a routine.

We gather every Sunday morning, we hold our 10 o'clock service, our Bible Study and Sunday school hour, our lunch, and our afternoon service. That's our weekly routine.

We also add in the Wednesday night Bible study as part of the routine.

And some of our ladies routinely meet for a Bible study of their own.

Routines are good – a lot of spiritual good comes to us with the discipline of regular spiritual routine. "Line upon line; precept upon precept..." That's why you should have a routine of Bible reading on your own.

But extra activity also has something good for us – we stretch ourselves forward in God's work when we have something extra.

You weren't all able to attend the service on Friday, but I think almost everyone was aware of it. The extra preaching doesn't "let you off" for today's preaching, but it should be another extra stimulus to spiritual growth.

So with this church in Tyre, the Lord gave them a week of "revival" with the great apostle Paul and his entourage in attendance. No doubt there was preaching, singing, feasting, great rejoicing in Christ together...

And then the meeting came to an end.

That is the focus of today's message: what to do at the end.

Proposition: The work of the ministry involves doing the next thing.

I. Introduction and involvement (4)

A. The apostle sought out the church

1. The church, as we mentioned this morning, likely looked back to the early days and Paul's persecution for their founding

Ac 11.19 ¶ So then those who were scattered because of the persecution that occurred in connection with Stephen made their way to Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except to Jews alone.

2. Also noted, no record of Paul ever having visited the church before
3. No way for advance notice to come: Paul and his people likely "just showed up"
4. Perhaps some of them knew Paul by sight, or perhaps knew him as "Saul the persecutor" twenty years before
5. What we do know: the verb "looking up" = "they were previously unacquainted with them and had to 'seek them out.'"¹

B. The groups interacted for seven days

1. The stay was seven days
2. The stay involved constant interaction, including prophetic activity

We will talk more of this when we look at Agabus next week

3. The prophetic activity is consistent with the warnings Paul had beforehand

Ac 20.22-23 "And now, behold, bound in spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there,²³ except that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me.

¹ John B. Polhill, *Acts*, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 433.

4. We know that Paul was determined to go to Jerus., believing that the Spirit wanted him to go
5. The interaction, though, means they were regularly meeting
6. No doubt that meant preaching, from Paul and others, and perhaps invitations to lost friends in the town

This is the kind of week a church would relish, an opportunity for personal growth, an opportunity for evangelistic activity.

II. Culmination and farewell (5)

A. The end of the meeting had to come

1. Nothing lasts forever in this world
2. Good meetings like this will come to the end of their course
3. The relationship between Paul and these believers grew and strengthened through this visit: as seen in the farewell

“The disciples at Tyre were not old friends of Paul, as the Ephesian elders were, but the love of Christ is the strongest of bonds, and at the end of a week he and they were as firm friends as if they had known each other all their lives.”²

B. The farewell is tender

1. The whole church accompanies Paul to the seashore, from which Paul will embark
2. They gather on the beach, the whole company
 - a. Not just the men
 - b. Wives and children, too

“In one of the few references to children in Acts, Luke noted that all the members of the Christian families of Tyre joined Paul for his farewell.”³

² F. F. Bruce, *Commentary on the Book of the Acts*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 398.

³ Polhill, *Acts*, 434.

3. They hold a prayer meeting, and farewells

How many prayed? No doubt several. Maybe there was a hymn as well.

And then it was good-bye.

III. Aftermath: back to the routine (6)

A. Paul embarked on his journey

B. The people returned home: to their Christian routine

1. They returned to their regular Sunday services

2. They returned to their daily work and witness

3. No doubt they never forgot the visit of the apostle Paul and his influence among them

Conclusion:

Proposition: The work of the ministry involves doing the next thing.

Every bit of our ministry has its beginning, its end, and its routine.

Those who are left behind are left behind to “mind the store” and carry on the routine.

- Preaching the gospel
- Baptizing the converted
- Discipling the converts

That’s the routine. May we take fresh joy from the word of God each week to keep on with God’s routine.