

Tusculum Hills Baptist Church  
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CONSEQUENCES OF LONG-WINDED PREACHING

Acts 20:7-12

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This sermon has three points:

- Eutychus did what all of us have done.
- Life went on after the fall.
- Being saved resulted in a story.

**INTRODUCTION:** Before I dig into today's text, I want to recap. In Acts, Chapter 18, we read that Paul visited Jerusalem. By our count, it doesn't seem like very long ago. In reality, it's been years since Paul's last visit. Now, he is on his way back. He continues to preach, teach, and encourage the young churches as he goes. Acts 20:1-7 outlines his travels and specifically names a few men who are traveling with him. These men were probably representatives from the various churches. When they reached Troas, they stopped for seven days. If you remember, Troas is the place where Paul received the vision of the Macedonia man. We do not know a lot about Paul's time in Troas or the church there; however, we do have this one very interesting story.

**EUTYCHUS DID WHAT ALL OF US HAVE DONE**

**SCRIPTURE:** Acts 20:7-9

*On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight. <sup>8</sup> There were many lamps in the upstairs room where we were meeting. <sup>9</sup> Seated in a window was a young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep as Paul talked on and on. When he was sound asleep, he fell to the ground from the third story and was picked up dead.*

**EXPLANATION:** This passage is actually the first record of a Christian worship service, and there are several things to note.

- The service took place on a Sunday, not on the Sabbath (Saturday), the Jewish day of worship. Because the Sabbath was given to Israel as a sign of the Old Testament covenant and Christians are under the New Covenant of Christ, we are not required to observe the Sabbath in the same way as Jews. The church chose to worship on the first day of the week because it was the day Christ rose from the dead.
- The church worshipped in an upper room of a house. It was common during this period of history for Christians to meet in homes. Church buildings as we now think of them did not come along until later in history.
- The group met to break bread. At that time, the church referred to it as the love feast or common meal, but it was more like communion than a Southern Baptist potluck. It was a time of love and fellowship in which they shared a meal and remembered Christ's last supper on earth.
- Paul talked. The Greek word here is similar to the word *dialogue*. Paul probably started with a rousing sermon, but he also entertained questions.

Although Paul had to depart early the next day, he wanted to squeeze in as many lessons as possible. We do not know what time he started, but it was midnight, and the end was not in sight. So, in a third-story room filled with Christians and smoky oil lamps, the conversation continued, and a boy named Eutychus grew tired.

The word used here to describe Eutychus is *pais* and suggests that he was between 7 and 14 years old. Some scholars believe that he was actually a servant. Although he sat on the windowsill and had the advantage of fresh air, the combination of the late hour, the smoky room, and natural fatigue took its toll. He sank into a deep sleep.

**ILLUSTRATION:** I bet most of us can relate. Have you ever fallen asleep in church? Did you nod off and drop your head forward and jerk back, or jerk back first and hit your head on the wooden pew? It does not just happen to children. A

friend of mine held a Bible study, and an elderly couple attended. The gentlemen often nodded off during the lesson. Another friend said that during her pregnancy, she was horrified and embarrassed when she realized she'd slept through much of a sermon. Worse still was when she had to shake the pastor's hand as she exited. She sat near the front and was certain he saw her.

It can happen to the best of us, and this particular night, it happened to Eutychus. Unfortunately, Eutychus did not just bob his head or get a pinch from his mom. His slumber did not just result in embarrassment. He fell out of the window to his death!

**APPLICATION:** Sometimes in life, we are in the right place, at the right time, doing the right thing, and things still do not go our way. After all, Eutychus was in church like he was supposed to be, right? He was patiently listening to a long-winded preacher, and still, something really bad happened to him.

The Bible tells us that in this world we will have trouble (John 16:33). Even when we are trying our best to follow the Lord, we are not guaranteed a life of luxury and ease. Think of the Afghani Christians and other Christians all over the world who are being persecuted and killed for their faith. Think of the Christians here in the states who have suffered and even died from cancer, diabetes, and COVID. Eutychus was trying to listen to a sermon, and he fell to his death.

## **LIFE WENT ON AFTER THE FALL**

**SCRIPTURE:** Acts 20:10-11

*Paul went down, threw himself on the young man and put his arms around him. "Don't be alarmed," he said. "He's alive!"<sup>11</sup> Then he went upstairs again and broke bread and ate. After talking until daylight, he left.<sup>12</sup> The people took the young man home alive and were greatly comforted.*

**EXPLANATION:** We do not have an EMT report. No one took Eutychus's vitals. All we know is what God's word says. The word used in this passage for dead can mean dead-dead, or it can mean "like dead." So, the argument can be made that Eutychus was just unconscious. Remember though that the author of Acts is Luke the physician. If Luke said he was dead, Eutychus was probably dead. In the end,

though, it does not matter. Eutychus fell three stories. It's unlikely that he would have no injuries, and it's obvious that if he was thought to be dead, his injuries were severe. Whether he was dead or just appeared to be dead, a miracle took place. We know because of what happened next. After Paul hugged him and pronounced him alive, everything went back to the way it was. They didn't molly coddle Eutychus or immediately take him home. They didn't spend time bandaging his wounds or even ask him to walk it off. Paul commenced with the meal, and the service continued for another five or six hours.

**ILLUSTRATION:** A woman who lost her son says that one of the hardest things, especially in the first few months, is coping with how the world keeps moving after such a tragedy. Many of you can probably say the same thing. You count time by how long it's been since your loss. There's a part of you that doesn't want to go on. You don't want to get up every morning, but the sun still rises. You don't want to eat, but your stomach still growls. You don't want to go to work or to the grocery, but the bills still have to be paid and your family still has to be cared for. People around you don't know about it or they forget about it, but you cannot and don't want to. It's maddening and heartbreaking. The woman said that at times she just wanted to shout, "My son just died! Please handle me with care."

Eutychus experienced a serious fall and a miraculous recovery, but time did not miss a beat. He and the people around him continued as if nothing had happened.

## **BEING SAVED RESULTED IN A STORY**

**SCRIPTURE:** Acts 20:10-12

*The people took the young man home alive and were greatly comforted.*

**EXPLANATION:** Paul left the meeting and continued on his journey to Jerusalem. Others probably went to work that Monday morning. Mothers may have headed home and started preparing meals for the day. Children did their chores or performed their studies or played with one another in the street. What do you think Eutychus did?

The passage says, "The people took the young man home." Maybe, this was his family, or maybe, Eutychus's family was not with him that night. He could have

been a servant of the household where the church was meeting or a servant of one of the guests. If so, imagine the story he had to tell.

**ILLUSTRATION:** The woman who lost her son was talking with the mother of one of her son's friends. She said that the death impacted her greatly and she felt God had spoken to her through that death, and now she had a testimony to give.

**EXPLANATION:** Eutychus experienced something tragic and life-altering. When he went back to doing what he always did, he had a history that he did not have before. Can you imagine him keeping it a secret? Do you think the others who were present kept it hush-hush?

I think Eutychus was probably the talk of Troas on Monday and maybe for a long time after. In the marketplace, people probably said, "Hey, did you hear what happened last night? You know, about that boy who fell out of the window and died? No, wait! That's not the end of the story. He came back to life!" When the women went to the well, I bet they talked about it, "Yeah, Paul, the missionary man who preaches about Jesus... Well, he hugged him, and sure enough, the boy was eating dinner with us a few minutes later." And what do you think Eutychus himself had to say? Maybe, echoing the words of another healed man, he said to his friends, "I do not know what happened. All I know is that I was dead, and now I'm alive."

- Eutychus did something we've all done.
- Life went on after the fall.
- Being saved resulted in a story.

**APPLICATION:** We live in a fallen world. That means that bad things are going to happen. Accidents, sickness, pain, death, loss, troubles, persecution...it's all a part of this life. It always has been, and it always will be. Being a Christian will not prevent bad things from happening. Trying to do the right things will not prevent bad things from happening. Bad things will happen, and then, life goes on. You do not get a pass after you have experienced a significant hurt. The world keeps turning. Your body keeps working. People go about their lives, and your responsibilities do not disappear. It's sad. It sounds depressing, and it would be if that was the end, but it was not the end for Eutychus, and it is not for us either.

Romans 8:28 says, *“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love God, who have been called according to his purpose.”* It does not say that all things are good. We know that everything is not good, but God promises his children that he can and will work through the bad things to bring about good in their lives and the lives of others.

**CONCLUSION:** Just like Eutychus, we have a story to tell. Eutychus could tell his friends how God brought him back to life. The woman who lost her son to death said that God does indeed give her comfort. And her friend has a testimony as well.

What about you? Do you see God working in adverse circumstances? Has he given you strength to get through it? Do you have a testimony to tell?

2 Corinthians 1:3-4 says, *“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.”* What do you do with your brokenness? Do you wallow in it, or do you let God use it? If you let him, God can take the bad things that you have experienced and use them for his glory. Your story can point people to Christ.

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