

Acts 20:17-38

Paul gave a pep talk to the elders at Ephesus. Here is my pep talk.

1. I want you to take out your notebooks...some paper...something and write down the following 7 focuses that are critical for you to keep at the forefront of FBCT.
2. Write them down, review them often, cling to them tightly so that you don't drift off course.

I. Make sure the Biblical Gospel Message is proclaimed repeatedly. v17-21

From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called to him the elders of the church. 18 And when they had come to him, he said to them, "You yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, how I was with you the whole time, 19 serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials which came upon me through the plots of the Jews; 20 how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house, 21 solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Make sure the Biblical Gospel Message is proclaimed repeatedly.

1. God is Holy
2. We are not Holy
3. Christ came to make us holy
 - a. GOSPEL
 - b. 2 Corinthians 5:21 *He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*
4. We can be holy!
5. Will you be holy?

II. Expect things to get more difficult for us as followers of Christ and be willing to adapt, but not to compromise. v22-23

22 And now, behold, bound by the 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.

Expect things to get more difficult for us as followers of Christ and be willing to adapt, but not to compromise.

1. Peter is concerned that these early believers have been surprised and caught off guard by suffering and persecution. This is the theme of his entire letter. Notice with me....
2. 1 Peter 1:6, 2:12, 2:19-20, 3:6, 3:9, 3:14, 3:16, 4:12-16, 5:8-10
3. The experience that we have had in this nation is not normal Christianity. It is abnormal!
 - a. It is abnormal for Christians to be wealthy and prosperous. It is normal for Christians

- to be poor and needy.
- b. It is abnormal for Christians to be characterized by comfort. It is normal for Christians to be characterized by suffering.
- c. It is abnormal for Christians to be characterized by physical and material security. It is normal for Christians to be characterized by vulnerability.
- d. It is abnormal for Christians to be characterized by popularity. It is normal for Christians to be characterized by persecution.

4. Persecution is normal!

III. Keep the great commission the goal. v24

24 But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God.

Keep the great commission the goal.

Matthew 28:18-20 *And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."*

1. **We have a master** with all authority in heaven and on earth
2. **We have a mission**
 - a. Locally: as you go make disciples
 - b. Globally: Make Disciples of all nations—all people groups
 - c. Baptize them
 - d. Teach them to obey
3. **We have the Means**
 - a. I am with you even until the end of the age.
 - b. In essence Jesus is saying, I am with you as you obey this commission until this mission is accomplished.

Keep this the goal and everything else will fall into place!

1. Maturing in the Word
2. Making Supplication
3. Meaningful Fellowship
4. Ministry
5. Miracles
6. Magnifying God

IV. Beware of false teachers and false teaching...even a little!v25-29

25 *“And now, behold, I know that all of you, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, will no longer see my face. 26 Therefore, I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. 27 For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God. 28 Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. 29 I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock;*

Beware of false teachers and false teaching...even a little!

Jude 1:3-4 *Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints. 4 For certain persons have crept in unnoticed,*

Matthew 7:15. *“Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.”*

V. Strive to maintain biblical unity v30

30 and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.

Strive to maintain biblical unity

1. If we are to flourish into the future, we must be unified!
2. Unity in our vision as a church: Acts 2:42-47
3. Unity in **THE GOSPEL**.
4. Unity? Keep your eyes on Jesus.

VI. Make Certain that Everything is Rooted in Scripture v31-32

31 Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears. 32 And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

Make Certain that Everything is Rooted in Scripture

1. Do we have confidence and assurance in the reliability and truthfulness of this book?
2. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 *All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.*

VII. Make sure your love for Jesus is real, steadfast, and primary. v33-38

33 I have coveted no one’s silver or gold or clothes. 34 You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my own needs and to the men who were with me. 35 In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”36 When he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed

with them all. 37 And they began to weep aloud and embraced Paul, and repeatedly kissed him, 38 grieving especially over the word which he had spoken, that they would not see his face again. And they were accompanying him to the ship.

Think about the grace He had given this Ephesian church!

1. Paul likely planted the church in Ephesus on his 2nd missionary journey.
2. He came back to Ephesus on his 3rd journey and spent 2-3 years ministering there!
3. He stops by yet again to meet with the elders of the church in Ephesus, before he made his way to Rome and to prison.
4. He writes them a direct letter: Ephesians.
5. Timothy, Paul's personal disciple and right hand man...his son in the faith, ministered at Ephesus
6. It is believed that John the disciple whom Jesus loved settled in the church at Ephesus along with the mother of Jesus and admonished them frequently before and after his exile to Patmos until his death.

Have you read the accounts in Rev 2 and 3? There is idolatry, sin, and more, and yet, Ephesus is the only church he threatens with extinction...and why???

1. Not because they were a bit off doctrinally...they were sound!
2. Not because they were stumbling and falling...they were standing firm.
3. Not because they were weak...they were steadfast and persevering
4. But, because they were no longer in love with Christ!

They had fallen out of love with Christ.

1. They were doing and believing right, but they were not feeling right!
2. Now ask yourself this question: **Are you passionate about and increasing in affection for Christ?**
3. *May the living God, who is the portion and rest of the saints, make these our carnal minds so spiritual, and our earthly hearts so heavenly, that loving him, and delighting in him, may be the work of our lives.* Richard Baxter
4. *Love like a watch, must be wound up, or else it will fall downwards.* Ambrose