

## ***20:7 Gathered Together to Break Bread***

### **A Memorable Gathering.**

Chrysostom: “When we were gathered together,” it says, “to break bread.” At the opportune time, when they showed they were hungry (and this not untimely), his speech began and was prolonged. So it was not primarily to hear his teaching that they came together but to break bread; however, once [Paul] began speaking, he prolonged the teaching. See how at Paul’s table all partook. It seems to me that even while seated at the table he was speaking, thus teaching us to consider all the rest secondary. Picture to yourself, please, that house with the lights, with the crowd, with Paul in the middle, speaking, with even the windows occupied by many people, and to hear that trumpet, to behold that gracious countenance!... But why did he speak at night? Because [Paul] was about to depart and never see them again. This he does not tell them, since they are too weak, but he did tell the others. At the same time, the miracle that took place made them remember that evening forever. Great was the pleasure experienced by his audience; though interrupted, it was further extended. So the fall took place to the benefit of the teacher. Besides, all who were indifferent were about to be censured by that young man who underwent death to hear Paul. Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles 43.2

## ***20:9 Eutychus Sitting in the Window***

### **The Fervor of Paul’s Audience.**

Chrysostom: Observe, if you please, how crowded the audience was—for the disciples, it says, had gathered together, and what sort of miracle it was. For it was in the window, it says, that [Eutychus] sat, and this at the dead of night. So great was his desire to listen! Let us be ashamed, we who would not do this even during the day. But it was Paul who spoke then, you say. What do you mean? Paul speaks now as well, or rather, it was not Paul either then or now, but Christ, and no one listens. There is no window now, and neither hunger nor sleep troubles us, and still we do not listen. No crowding in a tight place or any other similar discomforts. And the wonderful thing is this: though a young man, he was not indifferent, and though he was being overtaken by sleep, he did not leave, nor was he afraid of the danger of falling. Do not be amazed that [Eutychus] nodded off and fell. For it was not out of indifference that he fell asleep but from necessity of nature. But notice, if you please, that so fervent was their zeal that they were even on the third floor. For not yet did they have a church. Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles 43.7

## **20:10 *His Life Is in Him***

## **20:11 *Paul Conversed a Long Time***

### **Celebrating the Eucharist on the Lord's Day.**

Augustine: Far be it from us to accept this as affirming that the apostles were accustomed to fast habitually on the Lord's Day. For the day now known as the Lord's day was then called the first day of the week, as is more plainly seen in the Gospels; for the day of the Lord's resurrection is called by Matthew "first day of the week" <sup>14</sup> and by the other three Evangelists "the first day of the week," <sup>15</sup> and it is well ascertained that the same is the day which is now called the Lord's day. Either, therefore, it was after the close of the seventh day that they had assembled—namely, in the beginning of the night that followed and that belonged to the Lord's day or the first day of the week—and in this case the apostle, before proceeding to break bread with them, as is done in the sacrament of the body of Christ, continued his discourse until midnight, and also, after celebrating the sacrament, continued still speaking again to those who were assembled, being much pressed for time in order that he might set out at dawn upon the Lord's day. Or if it was on the first day of the week, at an hour before sunset on the Lord's day, that they had assembled, the words of the text, "Paul preached to them, ready to depart the next day," themselves expressly state the reason for his prolonging his discourse—namely, that he was about to leave them and wished to give them ample instruction. The passage does not therefore prove that they habitually fasted on the Lord's day but only that it did not seem proper to the apostle to interrupt, for the sake of taking refreshment, an important discourse that was listened to with the ardor of most lively interest by persons whom he was about to leave, and whom, on account of his many other journeys, he visited but seldom, and perhaps on no other occasion than this, especially because, as subsequent events prove, he was then leaving them without expectation of seeing them again in this life. Letter 36.12.28.<sup>16</sup>

## **20:13 *Intending to Board a Ship***

### **Luke As Accurate Reporter of Paul.**

Irenaeus: That this Luke was inseparable from Paul and his fellow laborer in the gospel, he himself clearly evinces, not as a matter of boasting but as bound to do so by the truth itself. For he says that when Barnabas, and John who was called Mark, had parted company from Paul and sailed to Cyprus, "we came to Troas"; <sup>1</sup> and when Paul had beheld in a dream a man of Macedonia, saying, "Come into Macedonia,

Paul, and help us,” “immediately,” he says, “we endeavored to go into Macedonia, understanding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them. Therefore, sailing from Troas, we directed our ship’s course towards Samothracia.” And then he carefully indicates all the rest of their journey as far as Philippi, and how they delivered their first address, “for, sitting down,” he says, “we spoke to the women who had assembled,”<sup>2</sup> and certain ones believed, even a great many. Again [Luke] says, “But we sailed from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread and came to Troas, where we stayed for seven days.”<sup>3</sup> And all the remaining details of his course with Paul he recounts, indicating with all diligence both places and cities and number of days, until they went up to Jerusalem; and what happened to Paul there, how he was sent to Rome in bonds; the name of the centurion who took him in charge; and the signs of the ships, and how they made shipwreck; and the island on which they escaped, and how they received kindness there, Paul healing the chief man of that island; and how they sailed from there to Puteoli, and from there arrived at Rome; and for what period they sojourned at Rome.<sup>4</sup> As Luke was present at all these occurrences, he carefully noted them down in writing, so that he cannot be convicted of falsehood or boastfulness, because all these particulars proved both that he was senior to all those who now teach otherwise and that he was not ignorant of the truth. Against Heresies 3.14.1.<sup>5</sup>

## **20:16 *Hastening to Jerusalem***

### **Saints Share in the Same Nature As We Do.**

Chrysostom: “For he was hastening,” it says, “to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost.” So it was for this reason that [Paul] could not stay. Look at him moved like other people, desiring, hastening and often not obtaining his object. These things take place to prevent us from thinking that he was above human nature. For those great and holy men partake of the same nature as we do, but not of the same will. This is why they attract great grace to themselves. See how many things they dispense on their own. For this reason he said, “So that we put no obstacle in the way of the willing,” and again, “so that no fault may be found with our ministry.”<sup>6</sup> Look, both an irreproachable life and much condescension. This is called planning, to arrive at the summit of both sublime virtue and humble condescension. And hear how he, who went beyond the commandments of Christ, was in turn the humblest of all, “I am made all things to all people,” he says, “that I might gain all.”<sup>7</sup> Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles 43.<sup>8</sup>