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Acts 20 verse 28. Let us be careful how we hear. For these are the words of god. Therefore, take heed to yourselves and to 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. So far the reading of god's inspired.

And inherent worked. We rejoice that he will add his blessing to the preaching of it. Please be seated.

Some of you have been reading one or another. Of the Volumes into which the reformation heritage books have divided. Uh, william gouges old. Book. Of domestical duties. I know that you young men. Are preparing in the portion of it for the breakfast this coming Saturday. And you not so young men.

Age range is two to 102 so you can Do with that, what you will. Um, Many of you have have read. Biblical vision for the home or holy vision for the christian home, holy vision. For christian marriage. That is what they titled the second. Second volume, holy vision for parenting.

And the third volume. Very helpful. As you get to the end of the third volume. One of the things that he deals with, there is something that Many parents do not think about. And that is preparing your children to do without you in this world. Um, Many don't even do this and earthly terms.

They don't make. Advanced preparation of their wills. And Uh, what is to be done? Materially and earthly when they pass, And, They leave things. So that much will be lost by the way of lawyers and accountants. Which also actually mentioned. So that's not a new problem. Um, And cause the division of Of the estate to be a point of contention and strife among the children after the parents are gone.

But one of the things that he treats in his instruction there, Even as one of the reasons for being done with the will early, For parents who are young, and of good health, Uh, getting it out of the way, so that when they think about the time that will come for them to leave their children in this world.

They may have more thought to what are the last words they want to leave? Their children with, What is the last blessing? They want to pronounce upon their children. As those whom christ has appointed to them. And to have who have been those through whom christ has addressed them for so much of their life.

What is the last prayer? In which they hope to lead them. If the lord should give them that opportunity. Final words are significant. And we being a less covenantal. Uh, sort of people in our day. And thinking less of eternity. And thinking selfishly of ourselves. And so, Not lovingly and thoughtfully about those who we will leave behind and generations that will come after us in our house.

And in the church. And in the nation. But we don't think about final words. Very much. And so we begin with this illustration in, in hope that Bringing a little bit of a biblical mindset to the

forefront. We will. Uh, we will weigh as serious. An important. These words that the apostle, no doubt was carried a little carried by the holy spirit to say, but the holy spirit, sanctifying him and using his faculty's Uh, The words that the apostle paul has thought about what is the last thing.

That he wants to say, To these ephesian, elders and verse 28 is the climax. We will take the rest of the interview, and The prayer and The. The tears and kisses flowing freely. From. All of that from verse 29 to 38, if the lord spares us to what another Uh, we'll we'll take all together.

Uh, next lord's day. But this is the climax. Since the last thing, the impression that he wants to leave. On these Ephesian elders. Who if they, Fulfill this ministry and and our conscientiously hearing the words that the apostle whom the spirit had given them as pastor for three years.

The apostle who is so dear to them and had quite literally, for most of them, nurtured and brought them up in the faith and in the ministry. As they went back and did these things they too. Might say these were the last Words, this was the last charge. That the apostle gave us.

We do this out of fear of god. We do this independence upon god. But you should receive this ministry. And the fear of god and independence upon god. And so that is the that is the main thing that is the great thing. Before us here that we would take heed in the way that god has said take heed by his word.

As something that has been appointed to us and the signed ordained determined by the instructed, commandant by god. So, not just take heed in his word but to take heed under him. As a responsibility, someone handling something entrusted to us by the living god. But also and this will come out more next lord's day but it is here in verse 28 as well.

Taking heed under grace. That receiving an assignment from the triune god. Does not just give it an infinite weightiness so that we say, who is sufficient for these things? But it points us to him. That the one who is the reason that we do it this way? Will be our hope.

As we do it, the way that he has set. And so, we'll consider this. This text, this verse under those three headings together. Now. Taking heed by the word. Taking heed under god. And taking heed. Under grace. The apostle says, therefore, Take heed to yourselves into all the flock.

Therefore you take heed to yourselves therefore you take heed to all the flock He gives us this linguistic connection, this this word at the beginning, that reminds us to consider, go back and consider carefully. What he has just said because of its connection to what he is saying now.

Therefore There's a connection to what paul has said. And what paul has especially reminded them of was his ministry of the word, how he kept back, nothing, that was helpful. Well, what are what is this complete body of everything? That is helpful. Well, it is found in the word of god.

It is found in the preaching of the word of god application, to the life, heralding, a personal address from god. It is found in the teaching of the word of god. Communication of a specific body of truth. And so there was not this. The, this division Between theology and love or theology and life, but both are from the same word of the same god, and both must be done from his word.

And if that is not done both in the public assembly and according to houses or as it was translated for us in our english from how to house. If, if all of this is not done with the bible, for all of God's people than something helpful as being kept back,

Indeed he has just said, further down in the portion that we heard last lord's day. That if something from all the whole council of god, the word that god has given us and We know quite definitively what? That means for us now. Every word of scripture. From the beginning of Genesis 1, to the end of revelation 22.

That if something is left from All of that left out from that. If we have shrunk, From that. Not that it can all be done in a day. Or. Well, preached, well and taught well in a year or more Unless we have something like paul's ephesus or Calvin's Geneva.

In which we are willing to lay aside much more of our lives. For hearing the preaching and teaching of the word of god. But we don't shrink back from the whole council of god, we make it our aim to do that, which he has appointed to us and if he doesn't spare us to what another long enough that comes in his providence.

But if we don't make it our aim, we are guilty. Of blunt. As the apostle has just said. Therefore, i testify to you that i am innocent to the blood of all and then he comes now this week and he says, therefore you take heed to yourselves I have kept nothing back.

From you or your flock. Now you keep nothing back from yourselves. Keep nothing helpful back from yourselves and keep nothing helpful back from the flock. I have proclaimed it to you publicly now, you receive it as a personal address from god publicly. I have proclaimed it to you from how to house.

Now, you receive it as a personal address, from god from house to house. And now not only take you to yourselves, but to the flaw, You keep nothing back, you proclaim publicly, you proclaim house to house. And then also with the teaching That nothing be left out of christian doctrine.

That the important theology of god's word not be considered to wearying or too difficult. But worthy of more effort and worthy of more application of skill that the people of god would be instructed and taught. Not as if something that the lord has told us is needless, but that everything that the lord has told us, has necessary.

It's similar to. For a very strong similarity here. With philippians tune, 12 and 13. And how not? Not just when paul was there and paul is coming now and he's saying i'm never going to be here again. You will see my face? No more. He says, but much more in my absence.

Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. You've seen how i handle the word of god. You've seen, how i address you with it. You've seen how i teach you the doctrine that is extracted from it. You've seen that when the holy spirit sends christ's apostle, this is how he applies to you and helps you.

This is how jesus grows you. So that we know what he means when he says not just in my absence not just in my presence but now much more in my absence work out your own salvation with fear and trembling what a great and way he responsibility that says before god,

For his god, who works in you. Both to will and to work. And so we use his means because it's his work. We use his means as assignment from him and therefore with fear and trembling But we'll use his means independence upon him. Therefore drawing confidence and certain whole.

From the fact that it is, he who works in us. But the will. And to work. And so there's this wonderful therefore and they first must take heed to themselves. Paul isn't going to be there anymore. To address then. He hasn't been there for a while. But he's never going to be there again.

They will see his face no more in this world. He says, therefore take heed to yourselves. It is. And The illustration seemed a little too mundane for the waitiness of the subject. When we did it in family worship, but i can't come up. With a better one. Like when you're on the airplane, And the cabin loses pressure in the masks, come down.

Do your own mask first. Your baby passes out. If mama has a mask on, she can put a mask on the baby and the baby will make it. If mama passes out. There's no one there. To put a mask on either of them. But even more than that. If this is true, if the triune got Has decided to glorify himself.

By atoning for sinners by the blood of his son whom he consecrates to himself as holy by that same blood and sends his spirit to apply this redemption by giving life and faith by which those for whom. The son has died will be joined to the sun by his faith and then begin to receive everything that is in christ.

Jesus and everything that has been won by Christ if the triune god. Has done this. And if his way of working is by the word of his grace, Then how can an elder or a minister think? That he is not going to that he is going to be useful and an example.

If he's not applying the words to himself first, If he doesn't sit under the preaching and the teaching And so, this is This is a word preached and taught declared. To use all of those words. From verse 21 verse 27. Enterprise, but it is to themselves first. And even more needful.

Because the apostle will not be there personally. To remind them. Well, not only do they need to take heed to themselves by the word, they need to take heed to all the flock. We consider this a little bit when we were considering about, According to houses, or house to house.

In verse 20. But to all the flock, Whether jew or greek. Or however else you might see the differences or distinctions between those whom the lord is redeemed and his gathering. All the flock. All of them. We are to preach and teach publicly and from house to house because it's a flock.

Here, he's been addressing the elders of the church which we hear in verse 17. But now he reminds them that the church is a flock of sheep. In other words, they are needy And they are vulnerable. They have to be cared for. They have to be led out each day and brought in.

They have to be fed protected from predators. I don't have. Ability for self-defense. Their greatest defenses to be around other sheep. So foolish. Are we? Who forget that? The church is a flock. And that the enemy is a roaring lion and that others are savage wolves. And that we will be all right by ourselves.

I have been honing my defenses. Well, there are no defenses for a sheep. Against wolves and lions. They have to be defended. And then god, we have a chief shepherd. And that when we repent and believe in him, we return to the shepherd and overseer of our souls. And this is why those elders that he has called from within the flock.

Have an office of shepherd and over here it's not two different offices. Here, we have it in one verse elders who have been made overseers in order to shepherd the church of god. It's all the same office. But take heed to all the flock, it needs constant care. And now if the great thing in the care of souls, is the word of god.

Received as a personal address understood. In. In what it says. And if the lord gives us, not only his word read. And meditated upon and prayed through and applied personally, you ought

to do that. And as a household. When you rise up, and when you lay down, As the lord has created the rhythm of our lives, quite literally, They may redefine male and female, they will never be able to redefine a day.

But as the lord has ordered, Uh, our lives that we would have the ministry of this work of his word day by day in the home and then weak by week in the assembly. If the holy spirit has appointed an elders as overseers and shepherds, Who could you be?

To say that you don't need them. Are you wise or her stronger? More loving. Than god. And so received the ministry of the word. Take heed by the word. Take heed of your own soul. If you have been made by the holy spirit, a mother or a father, a husband These two are our roles that the lord calls, those who he places them in to minister the word.

To cleanse your wife. By the washing of the word as the lord jesus does. And he who has one great bride has assigned to particular men, their own rights and their love for their own. Bride is to be like christ's love for his corporate brian. You wash her with the word.

Are you taking heed first to yourself? So that you wouldn't be that hypocrite that she can't stand to hear a word of bible from. And then taking heed to her. The lord's own little lamb. And the lord's flock. Whose care is? Is carried out by the lord's word. Take heed.

To your covenant children. By the word. Oh, you provide for them many things. Maybe even you lay up money for them. Although, that biblical duty has fallen by the wayside. You provide for them food. You have your ideas and different people have different ideas of all, the things that they need as far as Things to be a part of and things to learn and things to do.

But there is one whose ideas are more important. And the main thing he wants you to give your children is his word. That you would address them on his behalf. Not just discuss passages. The lord says this to us. We will believe it. The lord commands us to do this.

We will do it. The lord threatens this. We will cling to christ that we might not suffer it. The lord promises this We will cling to christ in full confidence that we shall have it. Preaching. As it were personally addressing proclaiming. And teaching. There are none to whom the entire flock of christ.

Is entrusted. Even elders. Have their Particular congregations. But the ones who are entrusted to you are entrusted to you. Take heed. By the word. Well, why? Uh, should we have this word ministry in our homes and in our congregations? Well, the first great reason is because god said so.

Why should you want to come to the table? Dear children. Well, because the lord jesus said so And as we heard this morning, Not able to do it by myself. Jesus is the one who can help me. Jesus knows what i need. Jesus says, to take the supper. And so i'm going to profess him.

I'm can gonna believe in him with my heart. I'm going to confess him before men, you know, come to his table in a way that by which, i'm not eating and drinking judgment to myself. But heating and drinking and remembrance of him who is my review. Why? Because jesus says, you should How many linger year after year?

Not believing and not professing. And not coming as if it's something they can do later when they're more pleased with what the churches like at that time.

And they deny themselves that. Which the lord commands. To heed. By the words, take heed under the god god says so and god says, so as a display of his triune authority and his triune, right? And his triune. Priority. First there is responsibility under the spirit, his triune authority.

Therefore, take heed to yourselves and to all the flock among which, or in, which within, which The holy spirit has made you overseers. Well, here is the wisdom of god. The holy spirit. He doesn't put in the congregation sheep and sheepdogs. He puts in the congregation sheep and other sheep.

Whom he calls whom he gifts, whom he graces. By the same gifting and gracing as he will work by his word in everyone else so that they can see that their elder is a sheep. Like they are But their elder is one whom the holy spirit has called and therefore the the elder or the overseer does not think too highly of himself for.

He is among the flock, too. He is one of the sheep too. He needs this grace too. And those Whom the holy spirit. Helps by use of these overseers that he has given or placed put set up. In the flock. They are encouraged the same spirit who's working in them.

Is the same spirit who's working in me and he's even using them to work in me. But this is a responsibility. As the holy spirit who makes overseers. Yes, you're supposed to follow first Timothy 3 and you're supposed to follow Titus. 1, there are particular men, whom the lord has selected for the eldership, and you can tell by the work that he's done in them, the character that they demonstrate, and how that character displays itself, especially in their marriage and especially with their children, especially in their house and how the lord has blessed their ministry in the means of grace with their wife and their children.

And you recognize those things. And and then there is the training up and the the teaching them of the faithful sayings the truths of Of the word of god and they developed this. This atmos to teach and they're recognized by their congregation and eventually there's laying on, there's a whole process that the lord gives us But the fact that we participate in the process does not take away from the fact that ultimately it's God the holy spirit.

Who makes elders and who sets them up in his church. And so, elder ministry does not belong to the elders and elder ministry. Does not belong to the congregation elder. Ministry belongs to the spirit, it isn't ours, and it is an optional.

It often isn't pleasant. Either to elder, or to be elder to oversee, or to be overseen to shepherd, or to be shepherd it But it is. The will of god, the holy spirit and therefore we must submit to his authority. But there isn't just the The fact of Who placed the overseers over this flock.

There's the fact of what kind of flock it is. And whose flock it is. See, it's not just a flock, it's a church. They've been gathered together as the the flock, the sheep of the living god because there are church they've been called out of the world to be gathered together and they've been called unto the lord.

And so the the flock is a church and it's god's church. Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock and when among which the holy spirit has made you overseers to shepherd The church of god.

Imagine one of you who are A younger sibling and you've got a much older sibling. And they have something that is their precious. Possession. The thing that they care about most in the house, And they entrust it to you. To take care of, and one of the other siblings says, What are you doing with that?

Big sis. Wanted me to take care of it. And how carefully you would take care of that thing. Well, there is nothing more precious to god, in all of creation. Than his flock his church. That's the reason there is anything. All of creation, all of providence is so that he could redeem for himself those who he foregave you and decided beforehand.

That they would be joined to and made to be like his son that at the last, the sun, the lord, jesus would be the firstborn among many brethren And whether you're thinking about your wife or your children, And the home or whether you're thinking about the congregation and the church.

Which the children in a covenant home. They're called, they're not called nothing but saints in the bible. There is not a record of a single conversion of a covenant child, in the whole bible.

They're called saints, they are set apart by god to himself. You trust that he has put them in your house because they are his and he has told you to call them hiss and you don't have a right. To call them vipers and diapers. You know, even vipers in covenant diapers, the diapers aren't covenantal.

The children are When you say this is the church of god, this is the child of god. This wife is a daughter of god. This congregation. Is the shack as the church, the flock of god, they've been called out to him. And you have a responsibility. If you have office in the, in the congregation, if you have office in the home, You have a responsibility under the lord and god, Which, by the way, it's a textual question, but The greek text used throughout the ages.

Now, not that, which was being recovered in the west in the 16th century, Not that, which was Dug up. And Comparatively late fragments. In the 19th century, but the one Used throughout the ages, says the lord. And god. Because in the last place, it's not just That the spiritu has made them overseers and god or the lord and god to whom this flock in this church belongs.

That they have an assigned value of the blood of god. To shepherd the church of god, which he purchased with his own blood. Responsibility is under the spirit, the responsibility is under the lord and god, but the lord responsibility is especially under the sun Who purchased the church with his own blood?

Why does the church have to be purchased with his own blood? Because the church has sinned against the glory of god. The wrath of god has revealed against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men who neither glorify him as god or give him thanks, but push down on the truth and unrighteousness and exchange the glory of the creator.

For the glory of created things. And so, even the blood of a perfect man would fall short. You'd be like, the, the The dear child, who still thinks American currency is worth something. Who's been collecting pennies and dimes and quarters everywhere. They see and they bring a couple of fistfuls and they put it on the counter for the object of their desire.

And they're pathetically and woefully short. The blood of a perfect man. Falls infinitely, short. Of the glory of god. He has to be gone. So that the blood will be worth enough. To purchase the church of god to redeem the flock of god. But how can he have blood if he is god?

Can God change. Does he have about? Can God have a body?

God must add to himself another nature. Because, In his divine nature, god is completely unchangeable. So he doesn't add trinitarianness to himself late. His triune. He is love. In himself. He is simple. All of his attributes are complete in himself from all eternity. Now, he his father's son and spirit from everlasting to everlasting.

But the sun adds to himself. Humanity. Nothing changes at all. With respect to his divinity. It can't. That's the nature of divinity. But he adds to himself blood because God has decided to redeem for himself. A people who can only be redeemed, only be purchased By the blood of the lord and god.

This is the gospel. And if you don't have the trinity and if you don't have the hypostatic union, which means That Jesus having become man, is god and man. Two natures in one person forever. And the two natures don't bleed into each other at all, but they are always joined by the person.

If you don't believe that about him, and if you don't believe in the trinity and if you don't believe that you're purchased of the blood of god, you don't believe the gospel. That is the only god there is. That is the only Christ there is? That is the only purchase there is But if god has purchased the church, by his own blood, what effort is too much for us.

What of what, he commands for these whom he purchased with his own blood. Is optional. So we must take heed under God in the last place. We must take heed under grace. The Holy Spirit who has placed these overseers, Within the church. He will, most certainly attend. Their ministry with his power.

When we cry out. Who is sufficient for these things? The great reason that these things are so great, is because the responsibility is from god. But so is the sufficiency. Are sufficiency as of god, He? Who has called the church out that the word church means called from or called out a He who has called them out to himself.

Isn't that one of your favorite verses? We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God and are what called according to his purpose. If it is the church of god, then god will make all things work together for their goods. We often believe the opposite.

When we're ministering in the church. God forgive us in our flesh. We often believe the opposite. We often believe the opposite when we're ministering to the that part of the church that he is assigned to us in our own household with our own children. We say all things are working against me.

All things are working against them and the bible says, all things work together for good. For those who are called according to his purpose. So you say, the Holy Spirit who made me. Her mama who made me her daddy. Is going to attend the ministry that he has commanded me to do with his own almighty power, you pull out your hair because you can't change your child's heart.

But the one who gave you the task can change your child's heart. And so also, With the father. Who has called them and makes all things work together for good. And then the sun, who purchased the church with his own blood? What is he doing now? With that blood You remember, in the book of Hebrews, it's been a little while since we went through it together.

He has taken his blood through the curtain into heaven, that of which the veil that Lord willing will hear about again. Next Lord's day afternoon was just a copy of he has taken his blood into heaven and what is he doing there? He always lives to intercede. And he is able to save you to the uttermost by the power of his indestructible life.

You see when the apostle here marshals the trinity to lay upon us responsibility he is also marshalling the trinity to hold us up with divine triune and encouragement That this being given to

us by the father and the son, and the spirit will be sustained by the grace and the power of the father and of the son and of the holy spirit.

One final word, then. We've talked much about the duty of the elder in the congregation and making also application. The parent. The home. But doesn't this also give you duty and encouragement as one who is under elders? Elders, who are sheep elders, who are sinners elders, who have to take heed to themselves first because their needy of the same grace.

But do you not see? That the triune god who has given you. Those elders is the one who's going to use their ministry. That the holy spirit is going to work in your heart and attend the ministry of the word. That the father is going to make old things continue working together for your good, because he called you according to the purpose, in which he was going to conform, you to the sun that the sun who purchased you, with his blood and has assigned these elders to you.

Now, by his spirit that he is interceding, that he is pleading his own righteousness, his own sacrifice, and saying, don't stop saving them, i will not stop saving them. I was save them to the uttermost

Who could want? Anything other? Than an elder-led church. Keeping back. Nothing. That is helpful. But proclaiming and teaching the whole council of god in public and from house to house. When this is, what The one who has saved us. Has given us. For overseeing us. For helping us. For shepherding us.

Our sufficiency. Is of god. Amen, let's pray.

I try and godfather's son and holy spirit. We thank you. That even what we have just done. Has this promise and this strength. That it is according to your word. That it is appointed by you and that therefore it is Independence upon and hoping in your grace, Now come we pray in that grace.

And keep working by your spirit. We ask In the name. Of the one who said his blood to purchase us. Even jesus christ, our lord, your son. Amen.