

Acts 20:17-38

I. The Elders

1. It is important to recognize the vital importance of elders in the church.
 - a. Acts 14:23
 - b. We must recognize that the term elder is just one of several terms to describe those men appointed to lead the church in teaching and shepherding.
2. We want to be qualified!
 - a. 1 Timothy 3:1-7
 - b. Titus 1:5-9
 - c. We actually read through these qualifications one by one on Sun mornings.
3. We also want to be faithful.
 - a. Yes, we want to be faithful to preach, teach, and uphold the word
 - b. We intend to do that better....especially as we get to the prison epistles (explain).
 - c. But we want to be faithful to shepherd as well...shepherd the flock spiritually
 1. One of our goals this year is to be intentional about learning how you are doing spiritually and encouraging you to press forward.
 2. I will be sharing details as to why we want to do this and specifically how we are going to strive to do this next week as we finish this message.
 3. For now, just know that we want to be faithful to shepherd you!
 - d. Jeremiah 3:15 *I will give you shepherds after My own heart, who will feed you on knowledge and understanding.*

II. The Example

Paul is a great example of what a shepherd, pastor, elder looks like.

1. Don't be afraid to follow his example.
2. The Holy Spirit, through Paul, actually tells us all (not just elders) to follow his example.
 - a. 1 Corinthians 4:16 *Therefore I exhort you, be imitators of me.*
 - b. 1 Corinthians 11:1 *Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.*
 - c. Philippians 3:17 *Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us.*

What did Paul's leadership look like?

1. Serving the Lord

- a. Men did not dictate Paul's agenda or schedule! God did! He served God!
- b. What a difference this might make if we got all of our marching orders from the Lord.
- c. Schedules / Decisions / Budgets / Plans etc

2. With all Humility

- a. *God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.* James 4:6
- b. The church fathers defined this word as "showing oneself above others, overtopping, conspicuous above others, pre-eminent."
- c. Another powerful explanation of this word (pride) was "trying to be *more* than what God directs, i.e. going beyond the faith He imparts."
- d. Does God oppose our "ministry" and we not even recognize it in our pride?

3. With tears

1. Matthew 9:35-36 *Jesus was going through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd.*

2. Psalm 126:4-6

4. With trials

1. 1 Corinthians 4:9-13

2. 2 Corinthian 11:23-30

5. Teaching

a. Boldly v20a

b. Publicly v20b

c. Privately v20c

1. He was not satisfied with corporate preaching.

2. He wanted to shepherd individually.

3. Calvin said, *“Christ did not ordain pastors on the principle that they only teach the church in a general way on the public platform, but that they also care for the individual sheep, for general teaching will often have a cold reception unless it is helped by advice given in private.”*

6. Testifying v24

1. The word here literally implies “to prove a thing by testimony.

2. Acts 2:37-40, 18:5

3. Testimony as a witness: Acts 1:8. Are we witnesses or advocates.

4. 1 John 5:11-12

7. Focused v22-24

1. He wanted to remain focused and finish well

2. 1 Cor 9:24-27

3. He had surrendered his life (no value nor as precious to himself)...it was no longer for him.

4. And he stayed focused until the end: 2 Timothy 4:16-18

8. Generous v33-35

1. We work to make money...but it doesn't end there.

2. We make the money to help the weak...to give.

3. 2 Thess 3:7-9

III. The Exhortation v28

1. Pay Attention to Yourself

2. Pay attention to the flock

- a. 1 Peter 5:1-4
- b. 1 Tim 4:16
- c. **There is a war waging for the souls of our members!** v29-30
 1. 1 Peter 5:8ff
 2. What are shepherds supposed to do beside feed the sheep? Protect and look out for the sheep.
- d. We want to be intentional about that from this point forward.
- e. I will explain much more and in detail next Sunday what that will look like.

Conclusion: 36-38