

ACTS 20:29-31

Acts 20:18-35 is a sermon for us.

It is the only sermon in Acts addressed directly to elders.

Spend these devotion times in our meetings reminding ourselves of what we are called to do as elders.

Look at verse 29-31.

A. The Context

1. Paul is addressing the elders of the church in Ephesus.

2. He has given them an example to copy.

How he lived; what he preached (v18-21).

How he sought to be faithful and was willing to suffer (v22-27).

3. Keep watch over yourself.

Your life and doctrine (1 Timothy 4:16).

4. Keep watch over the church.

Feed the sheep; Know the sheep; Guide the sheep; Guard the sheep; Protect the sheep; Love the sheep.

Follow the example of the Good Shepherd.

5. It is vital that we keep watch.

B. The Church is in Danger

"I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them."

1. Wolves want to kill sheep.

What is true in nature is true in the church.

Wolves are false teachers who get in amongst the flock to kill sheep by what they teach.

Teaching that leads to confusion or immorality.

2. Wolves can be hard to spot.

They distort the truth – use same vocabulary to mean different things.

Matthew 7:15: Wolves in sheep's clothing – recognise them by their fruit.

3. Wolves are inevitable.

Paul knew they were coming.

Often appear at times of change – new church; change in pastor.

4. APP: Keep watch over the church!

B. The Elders are in Danger

“Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them.”

1. Elders becoming wolves.

False teachers rising up among us.

2. Elders are not exempt from being taken in by false teaching.

Worrying because of the influence they have.

3. APP: Keep watch over yourself.

And we must look out for one another – listening closely to what we say.

C. Responding to the Danger

“So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.”

1. Be aware.

One of our roles is to make ourselves aware of harmful ideas, books, teachings etc that could harm people in the church.

2. Don't assume.

Be on your guard – if we have an expectation that it might happen, we will be ready for it.

3. Teach the truth, Warn against Error

We protect by speaking.

We also protect by being careful about who we allow to lead.

Titus 1:9: Qualification for elders is to be able to do this.

4. Be brave.

Because it's not easy warning people who have gone or are going astray.

5. Love the sheep.

Paul wept over them – he was worried for them, concerned for them.