

ACTS 20:18-21

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 verses 18-21.

A. The Context

1. Paul is on his way to Rome, and from there his aim is to take the gospel to Spain.

2. His way to Rome is via Jerusalem.

“The next day we set sail from there [Mitylene] and arrived off Kios. The day after that we crossed over to Samos, and on the following day arrived at Miletus. Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus to avoid spending time in the province of Asia, for he was in a hurry to reach Jerusalem, if possible, by the day of Pentecost.” (Acts 20:15-16)

There was a famine.

Paul had called on the Gentile church to help.

Deliver the collection.

3. Miletus was about 30 miles from Ephesus.

The church in Ephesus, Paul planted and nurtured for 3 years.

With the boat docked for a few days, he calls for the elders of the church.

“From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church.” (Acts 20:17)

Paul is speaking to those set apart to lead the church in Ephesus.

NOTE: Elders not Elder – there was more than one elder.

The speech has the feel of Paul passing on the baton of responsibility for caring for the church to these elders.

B. An example to copy

1. How Paul lived

“When they arrived, he said to them: “You know how I lived the whole time I was with you, from the first day I came into the province of Asia. I served the Lord with great humility and with tears, although I was severely tested by the plots of the Jews.” (Acts 20:18-19)

He was with them.

Spent time with them; got to know them; he knew their interests and worries.

Following Jesus’ example: “I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me.”

APP: Spent time with those in the congregation; get to know them.

He was humble towards them.

In the way he went about serving them.

APP: We will be by nature of the role in the public eye. Brings the danger of wanting people to see us, to acknowledge us, to think our needs most important.

APP: A lot of what we do won't be seen by others.

He loved them.

Concerned for them. Wanting what was best for them. Costly.

APP: Do you love people? Do you love the people you have been given to lead? Do you love them when they don't show any love in return.

He faced opposition for them.

APP: Expect opposition. Expect criticism. Expect negative reactions.

APP: How do we respond?

2. What Paul preached

"You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house. I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus." (Acts 20:18-21)

He preached for their good not his popularity.

There are parts of the Bible we don't want to preach, deal with, help people apply to their lives.

All Scripture is God-breathed and useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

For the good of the church we leave nothing out.

APP: Danger is that most of us want to be liked. Must ensure faithful teaching.

APP: Times in elders meetings where we will have to discuss issues.

APP: If we hear something preached from pulpit suspect – must flag it!

He preached publically and privately.

From the pulpit. In small groups. One to one. As parents.

Requires time and effort. He worked, worked, worked!

APP: 1 Timothy 3:2 – able to teach. Majority of time not from the pulpit.

He preached to all not just some.

Ministry to both Jews and Greeks.

APP: Have an awareness of who is in the congregation, the group you lead, the individual you are meeting with. Some will be hurting. Some will be backslidden. Some will be doubting. Some are ready to repent.

He preached the gospel.

Repentance of sins and faith in the Lord Jesus.

The gospel is for Christians as well as non-Christians.

APP: Every sermon, talk, conversation: Is the gospel in our teaching?