

## **ACTS 20:32-35**

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 32-35. Final part of the sermon.

### **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. He has given them clear instructions to follow.

Keep watch over yourself – your life and doctrine (v28).

Keep watch over the church – look after the sheep (v28).

4. He has warned them about dangers they will face.

The church is in danger – from false teaching (v29).

The elders are in danger – taken in by false teaching (v30).

So be on your guard (v31).

### **B. Who looks after the elders?**

1. The elders look after the church – but who looks after them.

Criticism, discouragements and disappointments, pressures of the task they have to do, uncertainty about the future.

APP: Realism about the difficulties of being elders.

2. Who can we turn to?

Paul doesn't tell us to turn to one another.

Paul doesn't tell us to turn to the FIEC.

Paul doesn't tell us to turn to the congregation.

"Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified."

3. Turn to God.

God looks after His elders.

## **B. How does God look after His elders?**

### 1. By His Word.

Word of his grace – it motivates us by pointing to Christ's death, it lifts us up when we fail.

Word that builds us up – it strengthens our faith, it helps us to do the work of an elder.

Word that gives us an inheritance – it reminds us of what our hope is.

### 2. APP: Be men of the Word.

Acts 6:4: "give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word."

Read it. Study it. Love it. Meditate on it. Obey it. Use it.

We need to preach to ourselves before we preach to others.

## **C. What does God's Word say to elders?**

"I have not coveted anyone's silver or gold or clothing. You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions. In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

### 1. Being an elder is about giving not getting.

Some travelling speakers in Paul's day were in it for the money.

Paul follows Jesus' example: "The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve."

Paul demonstrates sacrificial service (giving not getting) by working as a tent maker to support himself and his companions.

Nobody could claim that Paul was doing it for the money.

Paul didn't do it for the prestige either – look at who he served: the weak, unpopular, lonely, needy.

### 2. APP: Give all for the sake of the sheep!

If we are being an elder for what we get out of it – we should not be an elder.

It would be good to reflect on who we spend time with.