

“IF I NEVER SEE YOU AGAIN”

Acts 20:25-35

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INTRODUCTION

What if I knew this was my last Sunday to be with you, and that we would never see each other again? What would we talk about? What would we do?

Relationships in life are important—more important than money, success, position, power. Paul wanted to build lasting relationships, and wanted those whom he trained to train others—Pass it on! Remember, his life was not precious to himself—he gave it up to the Lord and to the Lord’s people willingly (24).

WE MUST TAKE SERIOUSLY THE COMMANDS OF GOD THROUGH PAUL TO THESE CHURCH LEADERS.

- I. PREACH THE _____
 - A. Content
“The kingdom” (25)—stay focused-“went about”; “The Gospel of the grace of God” (24)
 - B. Breadth: “Whole counsel of God”
All parts of the Bible; and truths; all of God’s purpose
 - C. Conviction: Don’t shrink
 - D. Clear Conscience—innocent of blood of all—even those who are tough to handle.
Oh that all preachers could speak this in truth!

- II. GUARD THE _____
 - A. Those being Guarded
 1. Flock
 2. Church
 3. Redeemed
 - B. Those doing the Guarding
 1. Elders (v. 17)
 2. Pastors (shepherds; flock)
 3. Bishops (overseers)—“Be alert” (v. 31)
 - C. Those being Guarded Against
 1. _____ from the outside
 - Savage
 - Unsparing

On the fierce nature of wolves as seen in the Bible, note:

- 1) Jer. 5:6—a night wolf “spoils” those who are disobedient.
- 2) Ezek. 22:27—Wicked princes are like wolves consuming prey.
- 3) Hab. 1:8—Chaldeans fiercer than evening wolves—very hungry.
- 4) Matt. 7:15—False prophets are “ravens” inwardly.
- 5) Matt. 10:16—Believers are like sheep among wolves.

- 6) John 10:12—Wolves attack helpless sheep without a shepherd
- 7) Acts 20:29—Wolves seek to destroy the church.

2. _____ from the inside

- Perverse and twisted ideas
- Schismatic—drawing disciples after themselves

D. The Example for the Guarding: Paul (31-32)

1. Conscientious—day and night for 3 years continuously (31)
2. Compassionate—with tears (31)
3. Corrective—“admonished”
4. Commending to God’s safe keeping
 - To God
 - To God’s Word of Grace
5. Coveting nothing (33-35)
 - Did not seek material wealth (33)
 - Worked hard manually (34-35)—Note **these hands**
 - Helped support others as well as himself

III. _____ THE FLOCK (32, 35)

- A. Build up believers **in the faith**
- B. Lead believers into their **full inheritance**
- C. Help toward **holiness**—sanctification
- D. Help those who are **weak**—spiritually and financially
- E. Bless others **by giving** of self, effort, and resources

CONCLUSION

*Not just anyone can or should be a church leader—those who are have solemn responsibilities!
And, not just church leaders should carry the burden of these responsibilities.*

We must preach and teach faithfully the Word.

We must carefully Guard the flock—conscientiously, compassionately, correctively, trustingly (committing to the Lord), and non-covetously.

We must Edify the flock in faith, into full inheritance, into holiness, helping the weak, giving generously to be a blessing to all.

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