

Paul's Encouragement of the Ephesian Elders

Compiled by Paul R. Blake

Introduction:

- A. Luke's travel journal - Acts 20:1-16
 - 1. Acts 20:1-6 - 102 days of encouragement
 - 2. Acts 20:7-12 - Sunday services at Troas
 - 3. Acts 20:12-16 - On the long road to Jerusalem

I. 17-23 - PAUL'S RESOLVE

- A. 18-21 - Paul's conduct in the past
 - 1. He had given everything he had; God's people hold nothing back
- B. 22 - Paul's call in the present
 - 1. Paul had no choice in his assignments. They were all made by God.
- C. 23 - Paul's crisis in prophecy.
 - 1. He was determined to go to Jerusalem. The true measure of a man is what it takes to stop him

II. 24 - PAUL'S REASON

- A. The reason of a pure motive
 - 1. Paul simply wanted to finish his course - Acts 9:15, 19:21, 23:11
- B. The reason of a powerful ministry
 - 1. God equipped him for a job, and he intended to finish it - 1Cor. 15:10
- C. The reason of a perfect message
 - 1. Paul knew he was preaching a perfect message - Rom. 1:16; Isa. 55:11

III. 24-38 PAUL'S REST

- A. 24 - The rest of a surrendered life
 - 1. Paul was not moved by what he faced in Jerusalem. Everything he was had already been sacrificed to the glory of God - Rom. 12:1; Gal. 2:20
 - 2. When you have surrendered all to Jesus, what are you afraid of losing?
- B. 25-35 - The rest of a sanctified legacy
 - 1. Paul could leave Ephesus knowing that he had done his job well and that the people were in place who could continue the work.
- C. 36-38 - The rest of a sovereign Lord
 - 1. Eph. 3:20

IV. PAUL'S REINFORCEMENT

- A. In Paul's emotional farewell to the Ephesian elders, he describes nine characteristics of elders who honor God and who deserve to be honored by God's people. These characteristics should be present and visible in the life of every elder.
 - 1. Humility - 19a
 - 2. Empathy - 19b
 - 3. Resiliency - 19c
 - 4. Bravery - 20-21, 26-27
 - 5. Fervency - 22-25

6. Vigilancy - 28-31
7. Dependency - 32
8. Generosity - 33-35
9. Intimacy - 36-38

V. PAUL'S RECOMMENDATION

A. What Paul taught elders

1. To take heed to ALL the flock--the rich and the poor, the bond and the free, the old and the young. It is the duty of ministers to seek to promote the welfare of each individual of their charge--not to pass by the poor because they are poor; and not to be afraid of the rich because they are rich. A shepherd regards the interest of the tenderest of the fold as much as the strongest; and a faithful minister will seek to advance the interest of all. To do this, he should know all his people; should be acquainted, as far as possible, with their peculiar wants, character, and dangers, and should devote himself to their welfare as his first and main employment.

2. The chief consideration that will make elders faithful and self-denying is, that the church has been bought with a price. If the Lord Jesus so loved it--if he gave himself for it--they should be willing to deny themselves; to watch, and toil, and pray, that the great object of his death--the purity and the salvation of that church--may be obtained.

B. What Paul taught preachers

1. That we all have a course to run; a duty to perform.
2. We should not be deterred by danger, or the fear of death, from the discharge of that duty. We are safe only when we are doing the will of God. We are really in danger only when we neglect our duty, and make the great God our enemy.
3. We should so live as that the end of our course may be joy. It is, at best, a solemn thing to die; but death can be a scene of triumph, honor, and joy.
4. It matters little when, or where, or how we die, if we die in the discharge of our duty to God. He will order the circumstances of our departure; and he can sustain us in the last conflict. Happy is that life which is spent in doing the will of God, and peaceful that death which closes a life of toil and trial in the service of the Lord Jesus.