



The Faithful Shepherd

Acts 20:17-38

Paul's Model for Spiritual Leaders and Faithful Believers

Paul meets the Ephesian elders for what is likely their final time together. His words are not casual. They are the overflow of a shepherd's heart and a man who wants to finish well.

1) INTEGRITY...A Life That Matches the Message *"You yourselves know how I lived..." (v.18)*

- Paul points to his life, not just his teaching. His credibility came from consistency.
- Paul didn't act one way in church and another at home. His faith shaped his everyday behavior.

Application

- Integrity is built in daily choices
- What you practice in private prepares you for public tests

2) HUMILITY...Serving from Dependence on God *"Serving the Lord with all humility..." (v.19)*

- Biblical humility is not low self-esteem, it is God-centered thinking.
- Paul knew he needed God's grace (2 Cor. 12:9). His confidence was in Christ, not himself.

Application

- Humility keeps us teachable
- Pride blocks God's work; humility invites it

3) DETERMINATION...Faithfulness Through Difficulty *"...with tears and trials..." (v.19)*

- Paul didn't serve God in comfort. His ministry included heartbreak, persecution, and struggle.
- Trials are not interruptions, they are tools God uses to mature us (James 1:2-4).

Application

- God uses pressure to produce depth

4) COMPLETENESS...Teaching the Whole Truth *"I did not shrink..." (v.20)*

- Paul didn't avoid hard topics. He taught what was spiritually helpful, not just what was popular.

Application

- We must value truth over comfort
- A balanced spiritual diet produces healthy believers

5) GOSPEL FOCUS...The Core Message *“Repentance toward God and faith in Jesus...” (v.21)*

Two pillars of the Gospel:

1. **Repentance** - turning from sin
2. **Faith** – turning to Christ and trusting Christ

The Christian life begins this way AND continues this way.

Application

- Real faith produces real change

6) FINISHING STRONG...Right Priorities *“Finish my course...” (v.24)*

Paul shows four priorities:

- **Mission over Self** (Christ-Centered View of Life) *“I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.” (Gal. 2:20)*
- **Calling over Comfort** (Clear Sense of Calling) *“the ministry I received from the Lord Jesus” (Acts 20:24)*
- **Faithfulness over Fame** (Finish Line Mentality) *“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.” (2 Tim. 4:7)*
- **Gospel over Everything** (Gospel Priority) *“to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.” (Acts 20:25)*

Paul’s goal wasn’t just survival...it was obedience.

Application:

- SUCCESS = OBEDIENCE

PROTECTING THE CHURCH...Real Dangers Exist *“Pay careful attention...” (v.28)*

Paul warns of three dangers:

Dangers Around Us (Wolves – vs. 29)

- False teachers from outside

Solution: Know Scripture

Dangers Among Us (vs. 30)

- Ambitious people seeking influence

Solution: Guard unity

Dangers Within Us (vs. 31-35)

- Carelessness - Forgetting watchfulness
- Shallowness - Weak Word and prayer life
- Covetousness - Idolatry (Col. 3:5)
- Laziness - Avoiding diligent labor
- Selfishness - Forgetting it is better to give

Solution: Stay close to God’s Word and prayer

GOD’S WORD BUILDS THE CHURCH *“The word of His grace...build you up.” (v.32)*

God’s Word strengthens, corrects, and matures us.

Application

- A strong church is built on strong Bible intake