

Fact Sheet for “Your Own Shepherd” Acts 20:17-38, Part 3

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What was the apostle Paul like as a person?

- Educated (Acts 22:3)
- Dedicated (Philippians 3:5-6)
- Fearless (Acts 19:29-30)
- Tough (1 Corinthians 5:3-5)
- Administrator (Acts 19:22; 2 Corinthians 8:20)

All of these...yes, but there was still another side of Paul. He was a shepherd.

This is the 3rd of 3 sermons on Acts 20:17-38.

- 1st – Theology (elder/overseer/shepherd)
- 2nd – Bible context (Ephesians; Revelation 2:1-7; Deuteronomy 6:5)
They had the right theology and application, but had lost the right heart in ministry.
- 3rd – The things said in this passage

Look at Paul’s heart!

ESV ¹⁷ ¶ Now from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church to come to him.

Administrator – time crunch (Acts 20:16) So he called them to travel a short way to meet him.

¹⁸ ¶ And when they came to him, he said to them: "You yourselves know how I lived among you the whole time from the first day that I set foot in Asia, ¹⁹ serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials that happened to me through the plots of the Jews; ²⁰ how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house, ²¹ testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. ²² And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there, ²³ except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me. ²⁴ But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

Ananias at Saul/Paul’s conversion (Acts 9:15-16)

What did Paul value in life?

²⁵ And now, behold, I know that none of you among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom will see my face again. ²⁶ Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all, ²⁷ for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.

See Ezekiel 33:1-6

²⁸ Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for (shepherd) the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.

He is encouraging them to have the same heart as himself.

²⁹ I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; ³⁰ and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. ³¹ Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears. ³² And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. ³³ I coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. ³⁴ You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my necessities and to those who were with me. ³⁵ In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

All we have is the Lord's.

³⁶ ¶ And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. ³⁷ And there was much weeping on the part of all; they embraced Paul and kissed him, ^{38a} being sorrowful most of all because of the word he had spoken, that they would not see his face again. And they accompanied him to the ship.

In this passage Paul called the elders/overseers/shepherds together to encourage them. These were a few men who held a very specific office in the church at Ephesus.

Later the church would lose something... their first love. They would still get the theology right and much of its application right, but their heart would be wrong.

In contrast Paul demonstrated in his ministry... the wisdom of an elder, the administration of an overseer, the care of a shepherd, and all with the right heart before God.

I have always said that the qualifications for this office seen in I Timothy and Titus are not just for those who hold this office... they are for all of us. I'd like to challenge you now. We all have shepherding roles... with our family, with those we are trying to disciple, with those in release time, with those in AWANA, etc. We are training both by what we say and by our example... in holiness, forgiveness, dedication, etc.

Are we exercising godly wisdom?

Are you reading your Bible daily?

Are we being faithful in the details?

A balanced administration

Do we truly care for those we shepherd?

Not just fulfilling the role

Sacrifice, values

Have we kept our first love?

Deuteronomy 6:5

Paul did, and has left an indelible example for us.