

Remember, Reconnect, and Recommission:

The Reunion of Class 510

Sermon Notes from Dane Fowlkes
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Now from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church to come to him. 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, serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials that happened to me through the plots of the Jews; how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house, testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me. 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. And now, behold, I know that none of you among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom will see my face again. Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all, for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God. Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears. 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. I coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my necessities and to those who were with me. 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.’”

And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. And there was much weeping on the part of all; they embraced Paul and kissed him, 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. (Acts 20:17-38, ESV)

First....

I. Paul Describes His Own Ministry (verses 17-27).

1. Paul Persevered through Suffering (verses 18-19).

- The truth according to Jesus himself is that suffering inevitably awaits each one of us who take seriously the call of God upon our lives.

2. Paul Preached Boldly (verse 20a).

- He proclaimed the Gospel without fear.

3. Paul Taught in Public and in Homes (verse 20b).

- The Apostle Paul was radically committed to discipleship as the hallmark of his ministry.
- Discipleship moves from least to greatest effectiveness in this order: large group, small group, one-on-one.

4. Paul Evangelized (verse 21).

- Paul's evangelistic message was one of repentance and believing.

5. Paul was Passionate about Completing his God-Given Task (verses 22-24).

- Paul clearly understood God's call to go as Apostle to the Gentiles (unreached peoples)—Acts 9:15-16.
- Paul saw his God-given mandate as that of reaching the unreached with the Gospel. Paul said, in effect, "I am uncomfortable spending my time where the Gospel has already been carried."

6. Paul was Thorough in Laying a Strong Theological Foundation for the Leaders He Raised Up (verses 26-27).

• So what shall WE do?

- Follow the example of Paul
- Lay a strong theological
 - For the Church
 - For the future

II. Paul Recommissioned the Elders of Ephesus (verses 28-33).

1. Protect YOURSELF (verses 28-31).

- The activity of ministry does NOT replace your own investment in personal spiritual growth.
- You CANNOT protect your flock if you're not protecting your own heart.

2. Protect YOUR FLOCK (verse 28).

3. TEACH Your Flock (verses 29-31).

- So they can stand firm

4. **SET AN EXAMPLE (verses 32-35).**

- You ARE an example, whether good or bad.
- Work hard (verse 34).
- Be a good steward (verse 33). (Aside: Make sure no one can accuse you of abusing the finances of the church.)
- Help those at risk (verse 35).

Part of our problem:

- We have done evangelism and started churches, but we have left the meeting of needs to the NGOs and governments.
- **What if**, when we start a ministry, we go into a community and assess the needs? Then we can meet needs while preaching boldly the message of Christ.
 - Don't focus on what you lack. Start with what you have.
 - Our God can meet your needs.
 - The basis for holistic church-based community development/church planting is the ministry of Jesus.

Finally....

The conclusion to Acts 20 makes clear Paul's motivation for his own ministry:

When Paul finished, he knelt down with them and prayed. They were all crying as they hugged him and kissed him good-bye. They were especially sad because he said that they would never see him again. As so they went with him to the ship. (Acts 20:36-38, Good News for Modern Man)

• **Questions we should consider:**

- ***Are you motivated by a call from God and a love for people?***
 - the calling doesn't end
 - the calling doesn't stop when it gets difficult
 - the calling is what keeps us faithful
- ***Does your ministry resemble that described by the apostle Paul in Acts 20?***
- ***Are you watching yourself so that you can protect the flock?***
- ***Are you a GOOD EXAMPLE or a BAD EXAMPLE?***
 - there is nothing in between
 - If people follow your example, what will it look like?
- ***Are you doing holistic church ministry?***
- ***Will you FINISH WELL?***