

Teaching the Saints

Week of March 21

Acts 20:17-38

The book of Acts records much that was said and taught to *unbelievers*, but what might the apostle Paul have said to a group of *followers of Jesus*? Paul's message in Acts 20:17-38 is the one example we have of a message Paul gave to a solely believing audience. Not surprisingly, it reads like many of his letters and encourages us to follow Paul's example as we serve Christ.

1. Read Acts 20:17-21. Paul invites the elders of the Ephesian church to come to him in Miletus, and he recounts how he lived among them in humility, with sorrow, with trials and dangers, and was faithful to teach. Because of Paul's consistent walk of faith, he encourages us in 1 Corinthians 11:1 to "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ." Which of these 4 areas is God inviting you to more fully exhibit in His strength during this season? And what might that look like?
 - Humility – read Philippians 2:1-4
 - Tears and sorrow – read Romans 12:15
 - Patience and fortitude during trials – read James 1:2-4
 - Proclaiming our hope – read 1 Peter 3:15
2. Read verses 22-31. Paul was compelled by the Spirit to go to Jerusalem, even though he knew it would be difficult. The thing that he most valued was being able to follow God's plans for his life and ministry. He warned the elders to be vigilant in their own faith and to encourage others in their faith.
 - What could God be inviting you into in this unique season?
 - How can you take advantage of this time to know God more and to share His love with others?
 - Are you drawing closer to God in this season or letting things draw you away from Him? How can your Community Group pray for you and support you in this?
3. Read verses 32-35. Paul provided for himself and helped those who were weak and struggling, because he truly believed in what Jesus had said that "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (vs. 35). Do we truly believe that God will provide our daily bread (Matt. 6:11)? How might we be open-handed with what God has given us? Would those around us know by our lives that we trust God and His provision?
4. Read verses 36-38. We see the tears, sorrow and prayers, that Paul and the elders experienced in their goodbye. As we are physically separated from one another and our jobs, schools, etc., there is sadness and grief. During this time, how might we be confident that God is still at work in this and that what Josh's friend told him is true, "God loves His church more than you do!"?

NOTES:

OTHER RESOURCES

READY TO GO DEEPER?

Lent Journal

The Lent Journal was designed to help us prepare our hearts for Easter. Take advantage of this resource to study God's Word and pray in specific ways for our church, our city, and the world.

Bible Reading Plans

What if you took advantage of this season to dive deeper into God's Word, His character and His truths? Go to www.woodmenvalley.org/bible to see the two Bible reading plans we recommended in January. It's never too late to jump in.

Paul's prayers for the Ephesian church

We studied Paul's last message to the elders of the Ephesian church. Take some time to read and study the prayers Paul prays for the Ephesians in the letter he later wrote to them. Ask God who he would have you pray these things for and let them know you are praying for them.

Ephesians 1:15-23

Ephesians 3:14-20

You may also want to listen to Pastor Josh's sermon series [Letters from a Prisoner](#) from August 2018, that covers these 2 prayers and 2 for the Colossian church.

Outside our Walls

Love Well

Pray for all those on the front lines – first responders, healthcare providers, grocery store workers – that God would give them strength and protect them.

Walk your neighborhood (alone or with your family) and pray for each house.

If other people are out walking, stop and introduce yourself, see how they are doing and ask if there is any way you can support them in this season.

Pray for our global partners and any missionaries who are navigating this season and all the challenges it brings.

DIVE IN ON YOUR OWN TO GET READY FOR NEXT WEEKEND

Willing to Follow

Acts 21:1-16