

ACTS: To the Ends of the Earth

Study 48: The Mandate of Paul: Shepherd the Flock (Part 2)

READ Acts 20:29-38 and **LISTEN** to the [sermon](#) by Pastor Craig.

We continue on with our study from the message Paul gives to the Ephesian elders. Last study we were reminded that the church of God is precious to our Lord Jesus Christ. So much so that He gave His own life for her (Acts 20:28) and is now sanctifying and cleansing her “so that he might present the church to himself with splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish” (Eph 5:26-27). The Lord Jesus has now placed His bride into the hands of elders and pastors to protect, guard, purify, mature and prepare her for His coming, when He will receive her to Himself.

Big idea: The Holy Spirit has appointed elders to shepherd His flock, which He purchased with His own blood.

Questions:

1. A. Why is the local church a prime target for Satan’s opposition?

B. From vv. 29-31, how does Paul describe Satan’s destructive work, and why might someone who propagates false teaching be appropriately termed a “wolf”? See also 1 Pet 5:8; Gal 1:6-9.

C. What characteristics might describe someone who is susceptible to false teaching and how might you guard against it? See v. 32; Prov 14:15; 1 John 4:1.

D. How can we identify false teachers? See Matt 7:15-20; 2 Tim 3:5.

2. How can we know which doctrines are worth fighting for and which ones allow us to be tolerant of different views?
3. Someone says, “They will know that we are Christians by our love, not by our doctrinal correctness.” How might you respond?
4. Someone says, “If you claim to be right on a doctrinal matter, you are being proud and judgmental of those who do not agree, and therefore you are in sin.” How might you respond?
5. How are our trust in and devotion to God and His Word (v. 32) vital resources to leading and protecting other believers? See 2 Tim 3:12-4:1; Deut 8:3.
6. Why is it important for elders and leaders to be free from self-interest and what evidence affirms this? See vv. 36-38; 1 Pet 5:2.
7. A. Describe the relationship Paul had with the church at Ephesus from vv. 36-38.

B. From this lesson how might you love the body of Christ? Be practical.

STOP AND PRAY:

Praise: God for His sovereign rule over all the wicked attacks against Christ’s church
Thank: God for the resources He provides you with to nurture and guard your faith
Pray: that you might be rooted, grounded, and protected in the truth of God’s Word