

## Goodbye to the Church I Love (Acts 20:17-38)

*[17] Now from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church to come to 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. [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. [28] 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. [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.'" [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, [38] 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.*

*[8] But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." [9] And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight...*

*[11] ... "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven." [Acts 1:8-9, 11 ESV]*

1. Goodbye's in this life are hard. They remind us that our hearts desire is for an eternity with no more goodbye's as we now know them (17).
2. Personal relationships in this life are a good gift from God, and should be cultivated and cherished (17).
3. The way we practically live on a day to day basis can have a great impact on the lives of others (18).
4. We should seek to live with servant hearted integrity, humility, sincerity, and sacrificial love (19).
5. We should be helpfully teaching all of God's truth both in public and private (20).
6. We should teach all kinds of people as we seek to love the whole world (21).
7. The proper response to God's love is turning from sin and trusting in Jesus Christ (21).
8. We are called to live Spirit led lives that are always open to God's direction no matter the cost (22-23).
9. Living for and sharing the good news of God's grace, in the specific ways He has called us to live this out, is the ultimate purpose of our lives. We should long to accomplish the work He has specifically called us to (24).
10. Could you share the whole counsel of God with someone? Have you been faithful to the work God has called you to (26-27)?
11. Pay careful attention to your life, your heart, and to those who have been placed under your care (28).
12. The reason why the church is so precious, and deserves our love and devotion, is because Jesus paid for her with His life (28).
13. Beware of wolves who are sinful, selfish, and ultimately seek to lead people away from the Perfect Shepherd (29-31).
14. We must all ultimately give those who have been entrusted to our care over to the gracious God who made them (32).
15. Covetousness should have no place in the hearts of God's people. Our hearts should be driven by love for others that results in hard work and generosity (33-35).