

## ***The Church of the Servant King***

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### ***Survey of the Bible Series – The Book of Acts***

(SB\_Acts 20B\_Paul's Farewell to the Ephesian Elders)

#### **Paul's Farewell Address (20:17-38)**

This passage is perhaps one of the most moving and personal speeches by Paul recorded in the book of Acts or in any of Paul's epistles. Perhaps the only passage that comes as close to reflecting Paul's sentiments toward the people for whom he labored is Romans 9:1-5 and 10:1 where Paul expresses his deep sorrow for the salvation of the Jews and Israel, but he is encouraged by the fact that they still have a future once the "fullness of the Gentiles" has been accomplished (Rom 11:25 cf. 11:1-2a).

9:1 I AM telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, 2 that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart. 3 For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, 4 who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the *temple* service and the promises, 5 whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.<sup>1</sup> (Rom 9:1-5)

10:1 BRETHREN, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for *their* salvation. (Rom 10:1)

11:1 I SAY then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. 2 God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. (Rom 11:1-2a)

25 For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery, lest you be wise in your own estimation, that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. (Rom 11:25)

If I had to title today's study, I would build from the theme. The theme that we will observe throughout today's study is Paul's example of laboring for Truth in the face of continual opposition.

#### *Outline of Paul's Address to the Ephesian Elders*

- Paul's past ministry at Ephesus (vv. 18b-21)
- A review of the present situation (vv. 22-27)
- The future responsibilities of the Ephesian elders (vv. 28-35)

#### *Paul's Past Ministry at Ephesus (20:18b-21)*

You yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, how I was with you the whole time, 19 serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are cited from *The New American Standard Bible*, (La Habra, California: The Lockman Foundation) 1977.

which came upon me through the plots of the Jews; 20 how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house, 21 solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. (**Acts 20:18b-21**)

Paul's address to the Ephesian elders begins with a brief review of his past ministry there. There are parallels between Paul's statements in this passage and his statements in some of his epistles. Also, there are some interesting things to highlight and note.

- Paul appealed to the way he had lived among them in order to urge them to remain faithful in the future (cf. 1 Thess 2:1-12)

2:1 FOR you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain, 2 but after we had already suffered and been mistreated in Philippi, as you know, we had the boldness in our God to speak to you the gospel of God amid much opposition. 3 For our exhortation does not *come* from error or impurity or by way of deceit; 4 but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men but God, who examines our hearts. 5 For we never came with flattering speech, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed—God is witness— 6 nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, even though as apostles of Christ we might have asserted our authority. 7 But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing *mother* tenderly cares for her own children. 8 Having thus a fond affection for you, we were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us. 9 For you recall, brethren, our labor and hardship, how working night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. 10 You are witnesses, and *so is* God, how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers; 11 just as you know how we *were* exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father *would* his own children, 12 so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory. (1 Thess 2:1-12)

- He emphasized his humble service in the Lord (cf. Eph 4:2)

4:1 I, THEREFORE, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing forbearance to one another in love, 3 being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (Eph 4:1-3)

- He acknowledged his tears of sorrow for those who rejected the gospel (cf. 2 Cor 2:4)

4 For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears; not that you should be made sorrowful, but that you might know the love which I have especially for you. (2 Cor 2:4)

- He acknowledged his faithfulness to proclaim the truth in spite of the enemies of the truth and their attempts to destroy him and the gospel he preached (Rom 1:16 cf. Acts 19:8-10; 20:1).

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. (Rom 1:16)

8 And he entered the synagogue and continued speaking out boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading *them* about the kingdom of God. 9 But when some were becoming hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way before

the multitude, he withdrew from them and took away the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. 10 And this took place for two years, so that all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks. (Acts 19:8-10)

20:1 AND after the uproar had ceased, Paul sent for the disciples and when he had exhorted them and taken his leave of them, he departed to go to Macedonia. (Acts 20:1)

- In Ephesus, the unbelieving Jews had plotted against Paul; however, Luke does not provide details of those plots – only the riot among the Gentiles (Acts 19:21ff cf. 1 Cor 15:30-32; 16:9; 2 Cor 1:8-10)

21 Now after these things were finished, Paul purposed in the spirit to go to Jerusalem after he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, saying, “After I have been there, I must also see Rome.” 22 And having sent into Macedonia two of those who ministered to him, Timothy and Erastus, he himself stayed in Asia for a while. 23 And about that time there arose no small disturbance concerning the Way. 24 For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Artemis, was bringing no little business to the craftsmen; 25 these he gathered together with the workmen of similar *trades*, and said, “Men, you know that our prosperity depends upon this business.” 26 “And you see and hear that not only in Ephesus, but in almost all of Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away a considerable number of people, saying that gods made with hands are no gods *at all*. 27 “And not only is there danger that this trade of ours fall into disrepute, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis be regarded as worthless and that she whom all of Asia and the world worship should even be dethroned from her magnificence.” 28 And when they heard *this* and were filled with rage, they *began* crying out, saying, “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!” (Acts 19:21-28)

30 Why are we also in danger every hour? 31 I protest, brethren, by the boasting in you, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. 32 If from human motives I fought with wild beasts at Ephesus, what does it profit me? If the dead are not raised, LET US EAT AND DRINK, FOR TOMORROW WE DIE. (1 Cor 15:30-32)

9 for a wide door for effective *service* has opened to me, and there are many adversaries. (1 Cor 16:9)

8 For we do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of our affliction which came *to us* in Asia, that we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life; 9 indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves in order that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead; 10 who delivered us from so great a *peril of death*, and will deliver *us*, He on whom we have set our hope. And He will yet deliver us. (2 Cor 1:8-10)

- Teaching “from house to house” is probably a reference to home based Bible churches, therefore each elder would have been a pastor of each home church<sup>2</sup>
- Repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is very balanced way of expressing the mindset of one who trusts in God’s provision for salvation – there is a

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<sup>2</sup> Stanley D. Toussaint, “Acts” in John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary, New Testament* (Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books/Scripture Press Publications, 1983), 413.

change of mind that accompanies faith or trust in Christ (cf. Acts 26:20-23; 2 Cor 5:20 – 6:2)

20 but *kept* declaring both to those of Damascus first, and *also* at Jerusalem and *then* throughout all the region of Judea, and *even* to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance. 21 “For this reason *some* Jews seized me in the temple and tried to put me to death. 22 “And so, having obtained help from God, I stand to this day testifying both to small and great, stating nothing but what the Prophets and Moses said was going to take place; 23 that the Christ was to suffer, *and* that by reason of *His* resurrection from the dead He should be the first to proclaim light both to the *Jewish* people and to the Gentiles.” (Acts 26:20-23) [*Paul’s address and defense before King Agrippa and Governor Festus*]

20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 21 He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. 6:1 AND working together *with Him*, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain— 2 for He says,

“AT THE ACCEPTABLE TIME I LISTENED TO YOU,  
AND ON THE DAY OF SALVATION I HELPED YOU”; behold, now is “THE ACCEPTABLE TIME,”

behold, now is “THE DAY OF SALVATION” (2 Cor 5:20-6:2)

- In Acts 20:21, Paul states that he preached “repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.” Repentance and faith are joined together by one article in the Greek and indicates that these two words express two sides of the same coin of trust in Christ – when a person places his trust in Christ, he is also changing his mind in regard to his beliefs
- Paul preached the same message to Jews and Gentiles (Gal 3:28)

28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (Gal 3:28)

#### *A Review of the Present Situation (20:22-27)*

22 And now, behold, bound in spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there, 23 except that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me. 24 “But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, in order that I may finish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God. 25 “And now, behold, I know that all of you, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, will see my face no more. 26 “Therefore I testify to you this day, that I am innocent of the blood of all men. 27 “For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God. (**Acts 20:22-27**)

The Holy Spirit had not prevented Paul from going to Jerusalem, but the Holy Spirit had disclosed to Paul that trouble awaited him there (Rom 15:30-31). The gospel Paul preached was “of the grace of God” (v. 24) and “the kingdom” (v. 25). Paul declared himself to be “innocent of the blood of all men” (cf. Ezek 33:1-6; Acts 18:6) which was another way of saying that those who had rejected his declaration of the Truth were responsible for their own lives and decisions.

30 Now I urge you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me, 31 that I may be

delivered from those who are disobedient in Judea, and *that* my service for Jerusalem may prove acceptable to the saints. (Rom 15:30-31)

33:1 AND the word of the LORD came to me saying, 2 “Son of man, speak to the sons of your people, and say to them, ‘If I bring a sword upon a land, and the people of the land take one man from among them and make him their watchman; 3 and he sees the sword coming upon the land, and he blows on the trumpet and warns the people, 4 then he who hears the sound of the trumpet and does not take warning, and a sword comes and takes him away, his blood will be on his *own* head. 5 ‘He heard the sound of the trumpet, but did not take warning; his blood will be on himself. But had he taken warning, he would have delivered his life. 6 ‘But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet, and the people are not warned, and a sword comes and takes a person from them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood I will require from the watchman’s hand.’ (Ezek 33:1-6)

6 And when they resisted and blasphemed, he shook out his garments and said to them, “Your blood *be* upon your own heads! I am clean. From now on I shall go to the Gentiles.” (Acts 18:6) [*After the Jews rejected Paul’s teaching in Corinth*]

*Note regarding Paul’s use of the term “kingdom”* – Here again, we witness the use of terminology that has deep roots in Judaism. The term “kingdom” to a Jew would evoke images of the Messiah ruling over an exalted Israel, believing Gentile nations and a redeemed earth. Paul drew from this frame of reference to describe the joint body of faith which consisted of both Jews and Gentiles during this new dispensation of the Body of Christ. The kingdom of God during the present age of the Body of Christ or Church Age in which we now live is simply that joint body of faith consisting of both Jew and Gentile (Gal 3:28) and which will one day participate in the rule and reign of Christ in their resurrected bodies. This does not mean that Paul was preaching a Kingdom Gospel (Matt 10:5-7 cf. Acts 3:19-21) at this time.

#### *The Future Responsibilities of the Ephesian Elders (20:28-35)*

28 “Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. 29 “I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; 30 and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. 31 “Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each 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 have coveted no one’s silver or gold or clothes. 34 “You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my *own* needs and to the men who were with me. 35 “In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, ‘**It is more blessed to give than to receive.**’” (Acts 20:28-35)

Note the imagery that Paul uses to describe the relationship between the pastor and those committed to his care. The shepherd imagery also had deep roots in Judaism (Psa 23; Ezek 34:12-16).

- 1 THE LORD is my shepherd,  
I shall not want.
- 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures;  
He leads me beside quiet waters.

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3 He restores my soul;  
He guides me in the paths of righteousness  
For His name's sake. (Psa 23:1-3)

12 "As a shepherd cares for his herd in the day when he is among his scattered sheep, so I will care for My sheep and will deliver them from all the places to which they were scattered on a cloudy and gloomy day. 13 "And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries and bring them to their own land; and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the streams, and in all the inhabited places of the land. 14 "I will feed them in a good pasture, and their grazing ground will be on the mountain heights of Israel. There they will lie down in good grazing ground, and they will feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. 15 "I will feed My flock and I will lead them to rest," declares the Lord GOD. 16 "I will seek the lost, bring back the scattered, bind up the broken, and strengthen the sick; but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with judgment. (Ezek 34:12-16)

The pastor (elder) is to shepherd the "church of God" – a phrase we find only in Paul's epistles.<sup>3</sup> The pastor was responsible to guard his own spiritual life and the spiritual lives of those under his care from the attack of the adversary (1 Pet 5:1-4).

5:1 THEREFORE, I exhort the elders among you, as *your* fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, 2 shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to *the will of God*; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; 3 nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. 4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. (1 Pet 5:1-4)

It is very important that pastors realize that the church belongs to God; otherwise, they will distort their responsibilities and their relationship to those for whom they are responsible.

**Note:** It is my belief that the term "elder" is another example of a term used by 1<sup>st</sup> Century believers that was inherited from their Judaistic frame of reference. The selection of "elders" as respected members of the Jewish community who could provide leadership and example goes back in Jewish history to Moses (Exod 18:13-27; Deut 1:9-18). It is also my belief that the believers of the 1<sup>st</sup> Century met in houses and each home "church" or assembly probably had one pastor (elder) who led the group. Any city might therefore have several home churches so that the entire assembly of believers in Ephesus (referred to as the Ephesian church) effectively had several pastors or elders. This has led some today to conclude that the local church is to be governed and led by a plurality of "elders." In reality, Scripture has very little to say about the organizational structure of the local church even though Scripture has quite a bit to say about the qualities of a spiritual leader. If a local church desires to have a system of governance that is centered around a group of elders, then they are free to do so. If a man with the spiritual gift of pastor-teacher organizes a local church, then there is nothing unscriptural about an organizational structure whereby he has the final say in how the church is operated. In the latter example however, the pastor would be wise to surround himself with respected believers of the congregation for the purpose of wise counsel and to assist with ministering to the flock.

13 And it came about the next day that Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood about Moses from the morning until the evening. 14 Now when Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, "What is

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<sup>3</sup> Thomas Constable, "Notes on the Book of Acts," [www.soniclight.com](http://www.soniclight.com)

this thing that you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit *as judge* and all the people stand about you from morning until evening?” 15 And Moses said to his father-in-law, “Because the people come to me to inquire of God. 16 “When they have a dispute, it comes to me, and I judge between a man and his neighbor, and make known the statutes of God and His laws.” 17 And Moses’ father-in-law said to him, “The thing that you are doing is not good. 18 “You will surely wear out, both yourself and these people who are with you, for the task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone. 19 “Now listen to me: I shall give you counsel, and God be with you. You be the people’s representative before God, and you bring the disputes to God, 20 then teach them the statutes and the laws, and make known to them the way in which they are to walk, and the work they are to do. 21 “Furthermore, you shall select out of all the people able men who fear God, men of truth, those who hate dishonest gain; and you shall place *these* over them, as leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens. 22 “And let them judge the people at all times; and let it be that every major dispute they will bring to you, but every minor dispute they themselves will judge. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear *the burden* with you. 23 “If you do this thing and God *so* commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all these people also will go to their place in peace.” 24 So Moses listened to his father-in-law, and did all that he had said. 25 And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens. 26 And they judged the people at all times; the difficult dispute they would bring to Moses, but every minor dispute they themselves would judge. 27 Then Moses bade his father-in-law farewell, and he went his way into his own land. (Exod 18:13-27)

9 “And I spoke to you at that time, saying, ‘I am not able to bear *the burden* of you alone. 10 ‘The LORD your God has multiplied you, and behold, you are this day as the stars of heaven for multitude. 11 ‘May the LORD, the God of your fathers, increase you a thousand-fold more than you are, and bless you, just as He has promised you! 12 ‘How can I alone bear the load and burden of you and your strife? 13 ‘Choose wise and discerning and experienced men from your tribes, and I will appoint them as your heads.’ 14 “And you answered me and said, ‘The thing which you have said to do is good.’ 15 “So I took the heads of your tribes, wise and experienced men, and appointed them heads over you, leaders of thousands, and of hundreds, of fifties and of tens, and officers for your tribes. 16 “Then I charged your judges at that time, saying, ‘Hear *the cases* between your fellow countrymen, and judge righteously between a man and his fellow countryman, or the alien who is with him. 17 ‘You shall not show partiality in judgment; you shall hear the small and the great alike. You shall not fear man, for the judgment is God’s. And the case that is too hard for you, you shall bring to me, and I will hear it.’ 18 “And I commanded you at that time all the things that you should do. (Deut 1:9-18)

Paul makes some incredible statements in verses 29 thru 31. He indicates that “savage wolves” from outside the group would arise and would not spare the flock. No doubt, Paul had the Judaizers in mind when he made this prediction. They had dogged his steps at every point along the way. He also predicted that some of the Ephesian pastors with whom he was meeting would distort the Truth and lead some of the flock away. This warning by Paul proved prescient based upon statements that he subsequently makes in his epistles and later observations of our Resurrected Lord.

For some men, straying from these things, have turned aside to fruitless discussion, 7 wanting to be teachers of the Law, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions. (1 Tim 1:6-7)

19 keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith. 20 Among these are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have delivered over to Satan, so that they may be taught not to blaspheme. (1 Tim 1:19-20)

4:1 BUT the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, 2 by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron, 3 *men* who forbid marriage *and advocate* abstaining from foods, which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth. 4 For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, if it is received with gratitude; 5 for it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer. 6 In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, *constantly* nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following. 7 But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women. On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness. (1 Tim 4:1-7)

15 You are aware of the fact that all who are in Asia turned away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes. (2 Tim 1:15)

17 and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, 18 *men* who have gone astray from the truth saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and thus they upset the faith of some. (2 Tim 2:17-18)

3:1 BUT realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. 2 For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, 4 treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; 5 holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; and avoid such men as these. 6 For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, 7 always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. 8 And just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these *men* also oppose the truth, men of depraved mind, rejected as regards the faith. 9 But they will not make further progress; for their folly will be obvious to all, as also that of those *two* came to be. (2 Tim 3:1-9)

2:1 "To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands, says this: 2 'I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot endure evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them *to be* false; 3 and you have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake, and have not grown weary. 4 'But I have *this* against you, that you have left your first love. 5 'Remember therefore from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you, and will remove your lampstand out of its place—unless you repent. 6 'Yet this you do have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. 7 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.' (Rev 2:1-7)

In verse 31, Paul states that "for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears." The pastor should observe his flock through spiritual eyes and with a keen

awareness of the impact of the spiritual battle upon soul of believers. He is very aware of God's purpose in human history as well as God's desire to transform each believer into the image of Christ. He is also aware of the snares of Satan and Satan's desire to neutralize the effectiveness of believers. When the pastor views his flock through these spiritual lens and he gets to know them personally, he weeps for them as he watches and ministers to them as they engage in battle.

In verse 32, Paul states "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." Note the connection between the phrases "build you up" and "give you the inheritance." There is a connection between the believer's choices to be edified and strengthened in the Word (Phase 2 sanctification or experiential sanctification) and the believer's eternal inheritance (Eph 1:18; Phil 1:6; Col 1:12; 3:24; 1 Pet 1:4; 5:1-4). However, it is not just a matter of studying the Word of God; it is a matter of applying the Word of God to one's life. At this point in Paul's life and ministry, he had to turn these men completely over to the Lord to use the Word that had been committed to them.

18 *I pray that* the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. (Eph 1:18)

6 *For I am* confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus. (Phil 1:6)

12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. (Col 1:12)

24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve. (Col 3:24)

4 to *obtain* an inheritance *which is* imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you. (1 Pet 1:4)

5:1 THEREFORE, I exhort the elders among you, as *your* fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, 2 shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to *the will of* God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; 3 nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. 4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. (1 Pet 5:1-4)

In verses 33-34, Paul states that "I have coveted no one's silver or gold or clothes. You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my *own* needs and to the men who were with me." Paul is not boasting here. Paul is reminding these men of his example which they were to follow. Men should not enter ministry if they are interested in financial gain. Paul went the extra mile and even provided for his own logistical needs so that he would not have to be a financial burden to anyone else. There are no references in the Acts or the epistles to Paul ever asking for financial support for himself even though there are many references to his efforts to receive a collection on behalf of others. In addition, Paul taught that the pastor should be supported by that ministry (1 Cor 9:14). Here in our passage, Paul is emphasizing motives and example – the pastor should be motivated by the joy of giving of himself, not the possibility of financial remuneration (v. 35 cf. 1 Cor 9:1-27).