

June 20, 2010 Father's Day – Faithfulness amid persecution
Acts 20:17-38

This passage recounts Paul's farewell message to the Elders of Ephesus church. In this passage Paul recalls his trials and troubles and calls the church to be faithful amid the coming persecutions.

1. Paul's farewell address
 - a. Only speech recorded in Acts that is directed solely to Christians
 - b. Paul explains his personal future is uncertain, except the Holy Spirit has told him (vs.23) that chains and tribulations await him.
 - c. He reminds the Elders of the message from God
 - i. A message of repentance toward God – vs. 21
 - ii. A message of faith in Jesus Christ – vs. 21
 - iii. A message of the Kingdom of God – vs. 25
 - iv. A message of the whole counsel of God – vs. 27
 - d. He reminds them of the example he has lived before them
 - i. Servant with humility and tears – vs.19
 - ii. Endured trials, the plotting of the Jews – vs. 19
 - iii. He attempted to be helpful – vs. 20
 - iv. He was a preacher and a teacher – vs. 20 (publically and house to house)
 - e. In all this he kept his priorities in order
 - i. I do not count my life dear to myself – vs. 24
 - ii. I want to finish my race with joy – vs. 24 – see 2 Timothy 4:7 “I have fought the good fight; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith...”
 - iii. A testimony of the gospel (good news) of the grace of God
2. Paul then casts a rather ominous vision for the church
 - a. Savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock – vs. 29
 - b. Some, from among the church, will speak perverse things – vs. 30
 - c. They will draw away the disciples after themselves – vs. 30
3. Paul is speaking to the Elders of the Ephesians Church (church fathers) what are they to do?
 - a. Take heed (to yourselves and to all the flock) – vs. 28
 - b. Keep watch (oversee) – vs. 28
 - c. Shepherd the church of God – vs. 28
 - i. A shepherd leads, a butcher drives
 - ii. The church purchased with God's own blood
 - d. Remember Paul's teaching and tears – vs. 31
 - e. Stay with the word of His grace – vs. 32
4. This text has multi-layered application today
 - a. To church elders (Council and Ministry leaders) and pastors
 - b. To parents in general with application to the family
 - c. To fathers here on Father's Day Sunday

BE FAITHFUL AMID PERSECUTIONS AS GOD IS FAITHFUL TO YOU!