

## Shepherds – Ephesians 20:28-35

In this passage, Paul addresses the elder of the church at Ephesus:

*Acts 20:28–35 (ESV)*

<sup>28</sup> 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.

- 1) What does Paul charge here to the elders at Ephesus tells us about the relationship of pastors/elders to their church? The church to her pastors/elders?**

Paul goes on to why such care is needed.

<sup>29</sup> I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; <sup>30</sup> and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. <sup>31</sup> Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears.

- 2) In what ways do wolves threaten the sheep? What threat from come from outside? What threats come from within?**
- 3) What does this mean for elders? How should these realities color the way the church relates to her elders?**

For all of this, the church's good does not depend on her human shepherds. God works through the for her good, but they are limited and fallible.

<sup>32</sup> 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.

- 4) What or who ultimately brings about the good of the sheep?**
- 5) How does this affect how the elders and the congregation relate to one another?**

Lastly, he points both elders and the congregation to what they ought to be on: not using the church for their gain but using what they have to care for weak and hurting.

<sup>33</sup> I coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. <sup>34</sup> You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my necessities and to those who were with me. <sup>35</sup> 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.' "

- 6) How can elders use the church for their own gain? How can congregants do this themselves?**
- 7) In what ways do we care for weakness and need in the church? What enable us to pursue service above our own gain consistently as a church?**

### PRAYER

Prayer is a vital way we care for each other. In what ways are you weak and needy now? Let us know so that we might come alongside you.