

ACTS 20 PART II

Lead by Example

*1 Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.
1 Corinthians 11:1*

In Paul's final address to the elders (pastors) of the Ephesian church we see Paul openly invite scrutiny into his life. He boldly asks them to look at how he lived while teaching them to Love the church. Who else can say that? Can you say you lived with such integrity that you should be the EXAMPLE of a Christian in your world? It's quite the challenge in our messy world but Paul asks us to "walk worthy of our calling" We are called to live life to a higher standard if we are ever going to make a difference. So, What examples has Paul left us with?

He never backed down from a trial! (Acts 20:17-24) Life, limb, or eyesight, it didn't matter what he was up against, he still preached the word PUBLICALLY! He knew the trial was part of the process and the cost of serving Christ. The words of Jesus ring true in his mind: "They will ban you from the synagogues. In fact, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering service to God." -John 16:2. He had experienced all of these things and more but counted his life as nothing unless he was serving God. Are you that serious about your service to God?

He Preached the **FULL** counsel of God. (Acts 20: 25-31) There is something to be said for topical preaching, but if that's all you ever hear, how will you ever learn the full counsel of Scripture? As we have it today, the best way to truly comprehend all of the 'Mysteries' of God is to read line by line and meditate on every line, discussing it with peers and mentors. The Full counsel of God is all of the Written Word.

Finally, Serve. (Acts 20:32-38) Paul Served the Church, leading by example in never being a burden. Not coveting money, clothing, or status, but humbly serving others as he served Christ. It was a self-sacrificial kind of service, the kind we see reflected in Romans 12.

Read Romans 5:1-5. How has this passage of scripture been true in your life?

Discussion Questions

1. Paul openly invited scrutiny into his life in order to 'Lead By Example'. He was the example of loving the church in many ways as he served them with many tears. In what ways are you commanded to 'Lead by Example'? (Think about your workplace, household, or social settings) How effective is your example at pointing others back to Christ?
2. 'Never back down' is a term most Christians don't really identify with. In Paul's case, he never backed down from a trial. What does this mean for you? How can you live more boldly for the kingdom of God starting tomorrow?
3. The cost of serving Jesus is high. It's never easy, and it will destroy your life as you knew it before Him. (Luke 9:23-26) What does this mean for you personally? What are you willing to sacrifice to follow Christ?
4. Paul was the example of 'disciple multiplication' in the early church. How does Paul's service to the Church resonate with how Jesus served? How can you emulate that service in your life?
5. A truth does not mind being questioned. A lie does not like being challenged. How can we have the kind of integrity in our own lives to openly invite others to challenge us the way Paul did?