

IF ONLY I CAN BE A SHEPHERD

March 17, 2019

I. INTRODUCTION/REVIEW

A. What if we changed our “If Only” from “if only I had” to “if only I can?”

B. Understanding our role enables us to live past our regrets.

Acts 20:28-31 Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.

II. IF ONLY I CAN BE A SHEPHERD

1. Be A Shepherd

Acts 20:28 Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

A. Shepherds lead.

- **Keep watch over yourself.**

2 Corinthians 13:5 Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test?

Revelation 2:4-5 Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first. Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.

- **Keep watch over your flock.**

Acts 20:25-27 Now I know that none of you among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom will ever see me again. Therefore, I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of any of you. For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God.

Ezekiel 33:5-6 Since they heard the sound of the trumpet but did not heed the warning, their blood will be on their own head. If they had heeded the warning, they would have saved themselves. But if the watchman sees the

sword coming and does not blow the trumpet to warn the people and the sword comes and takes someone's life, that person's life will be taken because of their sin, but I will hold the watchman accountable for their blood.

B. We are called to be Shepherds of The Church.

- The church belongs to God.
- The church is loved by God.

2. Beware of wolves

Acts 20:29-30 I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them.

A. Four Traits of a Wolf

1) A Wolf is Selfish.

- If you find yourself driven by self, it may be time for some self-evaluation.

Acts 20:32-35 “Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. I have not coveted anyone's silver or gold or clothing. You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions. In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’ ”

- There is a direct correlation between how we give and how we live.

Malachi 3:8-10 “Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob Me. “But you ask, ‘How are we robbing you?’. “In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse—your whole nation—because you are robbing me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the Lord Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.

2) A Wolf is Ruthless.

John 10:11-15 “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. “I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep.

3) A Wolf is Deceptive.

Matthew 7:15 Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.

- Truth will line up with scripture.
- Truth will lift up Jesus.
- Truth will build up the Body of Christ.

4) A Wolf is Manipulative.

3. Be On Your Guard

Acts 20:31 So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.

A. Shepherd with courage.

1 Corinthians 16:13-14 Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong. Do everything in love.

B. Shepherd with love.