



**Plain Talk from Paul
The First Pastors Conference
Round two
Acts 20:24-38**

Scripture quotations are taken from the following translations:

ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

**Scripture quotations taken from the New American Standard Bible® (NASB),
Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973,
1975, 1977, 1995, 2020 by The Lockman Foundation
Used by permission. www.Lockman.org**

Scripture quoted by permission. Quotations designated (NET) are from the NET Bible® copyright ©1996, 2019 by Biblical Studies Press, L.L.C. <http://netbible.com> All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked (NLT) are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

**The Good News Translation Bible (GNB) text used in this product is being used by permission.
Copyright © American Bible Society, 1966, 1971, 1976, 1992**

Scripture taken from the Holy Bible: International Standard Version® Release 2.0. (ISV) Copyright © 1996–2011 by the ISV Foundation. Used by permission of Davidson Press, LLC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED INTERNATIONALLY

Scripture quotations contained herein are from the New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition Bible (NRSVue), Copyright © 2021, National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide

**Scripture taken from the New King James Version (NKJV).
Copyright 1979, 1980, 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc.**

**Scripture taken from The Holy Bible: The Contemporary English Version (CEV).
©1995 by The American Bible Society, Thomas Nelson, Nashville TN.**

Scripture quotations marked (CSB) have been taken from the Christian Standard Bible®, Copyright © 2017 by Holman Bible Publishers. Used by permission. Christian Standard Bible® and CSB® are federally registered trademarks of Holman Bible Publishers.

Taken from the Complete Jewish Bible (CJB) by David H. Stern. Copyright © 1998. All rights reserved. Used by permission of Messianic Jewish Publishers, 6120 Day Long Lane, Clarksville, MD 21029. www.messianicjewish.net

Acts 20:24–27

“But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of God’s grace. And now behold, I know that all of you, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, will no longer see my



face. Therefore, I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all people. For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God.” (NASB 2020)

When last we were together we were with Paul at the very first ever pastors conference. All the various leaders of churches in the Ephesian area have walked the two days it is required to get to Miletus where Paul is to lead this conference.

Each pastor oversees what is a house church and by this time, there may be possibly over 200 of them in the immediate area of Ephesus and the surrounding suburbs.

We are reading a summary, per the Holy Spirit, of a conference which may have lasted one or two days in real time.

Paul has already covered the need for a servant's heart using his own ministry as an example. He has also told them of the cost of discipleship from what it is the Holy Spirit has revealed to him of his immediate future. The takeaway for the elders who are there, following Jesus is a commitment that does indeed have costs attached to it. Just weeks earlier, Paul wrote the following to the church in Rome.

Romans 8:18

“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.” (NASB 2020)

As we continue on in this conference, we are now going to hear Paul cover two more points. Look out for counterfeits will be the first and that has not gone away either. It has only gotten worse as the world has now infiltrated most churches and it is reflected in the various non-Biblical tripe they spout. And yes, we are going to discover some very troubling news as we listen to Paul.

There in Ephesus, “magicians were burning their books, and Diana of the Ephesians was on the defensive, so the pastors in Ephesus could expect all manner of attacks, some blatant and some more subtle.” (Wagner 2008, 461)

That has not changed in two thousand years either.

We will also learn that there is, for everyone involved in missionary work and church planting, a moment which comes where you turn the keys to the ministry over to those following behind you. That is the hardest thing of all as it means a reliance on the Holy Spirit and His guidance that you have indeed followed Him and taught the whole council of God as needed.

Let me introduce you to James Calvert, one of the first missionaries to Fiji. He was a printer and bookbinder and we would wonder, why him as a missionary? Because God has a mission for each of us and only you are the one who can accomplish what it is He has for you.

Off to Fiji James went, taking his new wife with him. At the time, those in Fiji, were cannibals. “The captain of the ship in which he traveled sought to dissuade him. “You will risk your life and all those with you if you go among such savages,” he said. Calvert's magnificent reply was, “We died before we came here.” And yet he would have been the last to talk about a sacrifice; it was not a life of sacrifice, but of real pleasure. (Tan 1996, 1177)

While in Fiji, he saw the people come to Christ. He also trained them in printing and book binding. When he left Fiji, he oversaw the printing, into Fijian, of the Old and New testaments. Now we see the why a bookbinder to the mission field.



He would return back to Fiji at least two more times. He summed up his work.

“When I first arrived at the Fiji group my first duty was to bury the hands, feet, heads, and bones of arms and legs of eighty victims whose bodies had been roasted and eaten in a cannibal feast. I lived to see the very cannibals who had taken part in that inhuman festival gathered about the Lord’s table.” All this in fifty years. So early as 1879 Sir Arthur Gordon, the first British governor, on his return to London said: “Out of a population of about one hundred and twenty thousand, one hundred and two thousand are now regular worshippers in the churches, which number eight hundred, all well built and completed. In every family there is morning and evening worship.” (Gordon 1893, 151-152)

Paul is on the journey that the Lord has for him and him only. There are indeed those who have misinterpreted what is going on in his life as something for us to emulate. We are all individuals and are all made differently and what the Lord has for you and me is not the same. The Lord said the following about Paul’s ministry.

Acts 9:16

“for I will show him how much he must suffer in behalf of My name.” (NASB 2020)

Paul had his ministry, each of us also has our own ministry. Paul is in love with his savior Jesus Christ and we should be as well. We should not confuse “the grace Paul lives in with the duty Paul is under. Paul’s suffering is spectacular and his commitment compels us to look...Paul is being embraced by God and he is yielding to the Spirit, and he invites his listeners to do the same.” (Jennings 2017, 193)

Paul has indeed learned the lessons of what following Christ would entail for him.

Acts 20:24–25

“But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of God’s grace. And now behold, I know that all of you, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, will no longer see my face.” (NASB 2020)

Yes, he is hearing that there is trouble waiting for him in Jerusalem. But he is planning to go to Rome and to Spain.

What we see is Paul telling the pastors gathered to listen to him that he testified to them of the gospel and we know from what he tells the Corinthians what is the gospel.

1 Corinthians 15:3–4

“For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures,” (ESV)

Paul also ties that together in verse 25 with his preaching and teaching about the coming kingdom. Yes, they are indeed both linked together by Paul, since Jesus linked them as well.

Jesus inaugurates the kingdom: it “drew near” with the inception of his public ministry (cf. Mark 1:14–15) and was released in power by his death and exaltation (cf. Mark 9:1). The things relating to the kingdom of God which form the theme of his postresurrection teaching at the beginning of Acts are identical with “the things relating to the Lord Jesus Christ” which form the theme of Paul’s teaching in Rome at the end of the book (28:31) (Bruce 1988, 32, Bruce 1988)



"At Christ's first coming the age to come invaded this present age; at his coming in glory the age to come will have altogether superseded this present age. Between the two comings the two ages overlap; the people of Christ live temporally in this present age while spiritually they belong to the heavenly kingdom and enjoy by anticipation the life of the age to come." (Bruce 1988, 33) We are already but not yet in the Kingdom and that is what Paul is telling us in these two verses.

Most commentaries you look at will point out that Paul knew he was on a death march and as a result would not see them again. He has been doing ministry in this region of the world now for almost eight years. He is driven to reclaim the entire planet for the Lord, and that means leaving the Aegean and heading further west. His plans were clearly stated to the church in Rome as he wrote to them from Corinth just before beginning his latest trip.

Romans 15:22–29

"This is the reason why I have so often been hindered from coming to you. But now, since **I no longer have any room for work in these regions, and since I have longed for many years to come to you, I hope to see you in passing as I go to Spain, and to be helped on my journey there by you, once I have enjoyed your company for a while. At present, however, I am going to Jerusalem bringing aid to the saints. For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make some contribution for the poor among the saints at Jerusalem.** For they were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings, they ought also to be of service to them in material blessings. **When therefore I have completed this and have delivered to them what has been collected, I will leave for Spain by way of you. I know that when I come to you I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ.**" (ESV)

So, what is the big deal about Paul wanting to go to Spain? "Why is Spain of any concern to us, and why did Paul want so badly to go there? In Paul's day, Spain was where Tarshish was. Tarshish was a Phoenician colony in what was later Spain. The point is profound: Paul was convinced that his life's mission as apostle to the Gentiles—the disinherited nations—would only be finished when he got to Spain. As incredible as it sounds, Paul was conscious that his mission for Jesus actually involved spreading the gospel to the westernmost part of the known world—Tarshish—so that the disinheritance at Babel would be reversed." (Heiser 2025, 368)

Paul's plans were to be put on hold as a result of what was going to happen to him upon arrival in Jerusalem. When he tells the assembled elders of what is coming, he truly does not know more than he is letting on.

Paul looks to the future and the expectation he has that he will never see them again. As it turned out, however, Paul apparently did return to the area later in his life, as the Pastorals indicate, but at the time, his sense was that a later visit was not likely. (Bock 2007, 628)

I do not look at what he is saying here as a last will and testament, I am going to die type of a speech. This would be no different than Calvert telling the people of Fiji as he was preparing to sail back to England, farewell. He did not know he would be back, and he was, twice.

Paul is doing the same thing here. Since we have the entire text of the Bible, we do indeed know what is coming up in his life, but at this point, he only knows about persecution coming in Jerusalem.

He has future plans to engage in once he is done in Jerusalem, but that will take a few years of a detour first in Rome. Dr. Osborne relates the following about Paul going to Spain.

While it is not recorded in the New Testament, there is a possibility that Paul actually managed a visit there, as suggested in a letter written to the church in Corinth in AD 96. The letter says that Paul,



“reaching the limits of the west he bore witness before rulers” (1 Clement 5:7). However, it is difficult to know when he could have gone to Spain since he returned to the churches of Macedonia and Asia Minor after his imprisonment (see Phil 2:24 as well as 1–2 Timothy and Titus). A couple years later he was arrested in the province of Asia (2 Tim 1:15), where he went after the Roman imprisonment. A short time later, according to tradition, he was executed by the Romans during the persecution under the emperor Nero. The only way there would have been time for a trip to Spain is if Paul’s arrest and execution took place after Nero’s reign. In short, it is an interesting possibility but cannot be proved. (Osborne 2017, 483-484)

The one thing Paul tells the pastors is that he has taught them the whole council of God. He has left nothing out.

Acts 20:26–27

“Therefore, I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all people. For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God.” (NASB 2020)

Interesting how Paul phrases the accountability he has as a pastor and teacher to have fully presented the entire gospel to those he was charged to shepherd. He is comparing himself to the watchman on the wall from Ezekiel 33.

Ezekiel 33:2–6

“‘Son of man, give your people this message: ‘When I bring an army against a country, the people of that land choose one of their own to be a watchman. **When the watchman sees the enemy coming, he sounds the alarm to warn the people. Then if those who hear the alarm refuse to take action, it is their own fault if they die. They heard the alarm but ignored it, so the responsibility is theirs. If they had listened to the warning, they could have saved their lives. But if the watchman sees the enemy coming and doesn’t sound the alarm to warn the people, he is responsible for their captivity. They will die in their sins, but I will hold the watchman responsible for their deaths.**’” (NLT)

The language of guilt for causing a person’s death is here applied to the spiritual responsibility of the pastor for faithful presentation of the message that brings life. As the watchman who warns people faithfully of the coming of an enemy is not guilty if they choose to ignore the warning, so it was with Paul as a preacher of the gospel. (Marshall 1980, 351-352)

Because of what Paul is about to discuss, it is important that we all see the important urgency of what he is saying. He is telling the assembled pastors their job is to be a watchman on the wall. To warn those in their flock of their need to come to Christ or if they are following Him, the need to be obedient to Christ at all times.

The responsibility is indeed one that is heavy and if it is not faithfully fulfilled, holds the one who is responsible personally responsible for the fate of the one who they failed to warn. Each of us are accountable to the Lord for speaking out to our friends, families and neighbors and telling them our story of what Jesus has done for us.

The Holy Spirit will pick it up from there and do His thing. All we are asked to do is take advantage of those opportunities as they are provided to us by the Holy Spirit.

It is this accountability though as to why we are committed to teaching the whole council of God, the scriptures, chapter by chapter and verse by verse. Paul tells us he left nothing out.



And he then moves on to provide a warning to the assembled pastors. As we continue to grow as a church, there will be opportunities for service to include teaching, leading groups, and so on. Each of those groups are the portion of God's flock He is blessing you with caring for.

Acts 20:28–31

“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. I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things to draw away the disciples after them. 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.” (NASB 2020)

Paul's first point here, “be on guard for yourselves.” Earlier, Paul had written the following to Corinth.

2 Corinthians 13:5

“Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?” (NASB 2020)

I agree with Dr. McGee. “This has nothing to do with free will or election or the security of the believer. Paul says we should examine ourselves to see whether we are in the faith or not. We should be willing to face up to this issue. I think two or three times a year we should do this.” (McGee 1997, 145)

As followers of Jesus Christ, we are encouraged, commanded actually, to test ourselves and see if our lifestyle, the way we think and work and do life is consistent with being a follower of Jesus Christ. Jesus told a parable relating to us that in the last days, there will be those who will look like and feel like other followers of Jesus, but aren't.

Matthew 13:24–30

“Here is another story Jesus told: ‘The Kingdom of Heaven is like a farmer who planted good seed in his field. But that night as the workers slept, his enemy came and planted weeds among the wheat, then slipped away. When the crop began to grow and produce grain, the weeds also grew. ‘The farmer’s workers went to him and said, ‘Sir, the field where you planted that good seed is full of weeds! Where did they come from?’ “ ‘An enemy has done this!’ the farmer exclaimed. “ ‘**Should we pull out the weeds?**’ **they asked. “ ‘No,’ he replied, ‘you’ll uproot the wheat if you do. Let both grow together until the harvest. Then I will tell the harvesters to sort out the weeds, tie them into bundles, and burn them, and to put the wheat in the barn.’ ”**” (NLT)

As we examine ourselves, who or what is talking to us and who are we listening to.

David outlines the danger of listening to sin in Psalms 36:1. As we examine ourselves, can we sin and then say, “I’m good.” Or do we feel the weight of what we have done and turn to Him in repentance exercising 1 John 1:9. Do we recognize that we are sinners saved by the grace of God because we believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross for us so that we can indeed be forgiven? Or are we going with the flow.

To get into Bible school, you had to fill out not just the application to attend but also provide a handwritten testimony of your salvation experience. I learned though, anyone can do that and not believe.

Across the hall from me there was a young man I will call Harry, not his real name. Harry would pray with us, attend chapel with us and was getting A's in Bible classes. And everything was good until he heard teaching on the rapture of the church. One morning there was a traffic accident outside the dorm and he was awakened to the sound of a car horn. He looked out the window, saw the car, but did not see anyone



outside, no one at all. There were some trees on the other side of the car and that is where everyone had gone, but he did not know that. He assumed the rapture of the church had occurred and he had been left behind. There was no one in the hallway either. So he decided to gather his stuff and leave quickly.

As he was leaving, we ran into him and wondered where he was going. He laughed and then went back to his room. That night, he accepted Christ as his savior and told us the next day. We all rejoiced with him, not embarrassed at all with him but so thankful he was no going to be with us for all eternity. But how many others were there who did not have that experience and realize their need.

Matthew 7:21–23

““Not everyone who calls out to me, ‘Lord! Lord!’ will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Only those who actually do the will of my Father in heaven will enter. On judgment day many will say to me, ‘Lord! Lord! We prophesied in your name and cast out demons in your name and performed many miracles in your name.’ But I will reply, ‘I never knew you. Get away from me, you who break God’s laws.’” (NLT)

When Paul says to be on guard for yourself, this is indeed what he is talking about. He is also talking about the temptation of the flesh to do things in the flesh and have a “great and mighty” ministry.

Or as I was told by a pastor, “it’s all about butts in seats and tithes.”

No, it isn’t. As an overseer, a shepherd of the church of God, by the way, this is the first time this term is used in the Bible, those of us the Lord has called to this have deep responsibility to the Master Shepherd as we are charged to care for those whom He has died for.

Spoilers, some of those in the room with Paul, are wolves in sheep's clothing.

Acts 20:29–30

“I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things to draw away the disciples after them.” (NASB 2020)

It is bad enough to understand that there are those who are cruising around following their fathers desire seeking those they can devour and stealing from the flock; but to discover there are those who are in trusted long-term positions as pastors in a church who are simply waiting for the right moment to attack, is tough to handle.

How long was Judas Iscariot part of the ministry with Jesus? 3 years. If that is the case, then why would this shock us? Treachery is hard to fathom and deal with when it happens to you personally. When someone you have trusted, in some cases for years, removes the pretense and shows who they really are, it is indeed shocking. Mark Hitchcock and Jeff Kinley add this.

“But heretics don’t fly into churches on brooms, maniacally mocking Scripture and terrorizing the flock. They don’t show up sporting horns and sinister smiles. Rather, they gain entrance into the fold through persuasive words, self-help principles, and charismatic personalities. They enter via slick, well-designed websites and blogs, bringing promises of personal utopia for their followers. They are well groomed, attractive, smiling, likable, inspiring, convincing, and most of all marketable. Their mission is to make you happy; to make you feel good about yourself. They want to help you make the world a place of “Justice. Peace. Love. Equality.” Of course, each of those virtues is redefined to accommodate and conform to an ever-evolving worldly value system. Their portrayal of Jesus’ love is like a magic blanket that somehow mutes other, more disturbing attributes of God or uncomfortable truths found in the Bible.



Though these teachers often reference Christ and selected Scripture, it's a new image of Christianity they're peddling, one not bound to the archaic, restrictive, narrow beliefs and practices of your grandparents' faith. (We're more enlightened now.)" (Hitchcock and Kinley 2017, 160)

Satan wants to destroy the church, and nothing will get people out of the church and keep others out than by having a pastor or teacher turn rogue. The only thing, they are not rogue, they are showing who they really are. But those who are injured leave, and many never return.

False teachers who have always been that are identifiable and on their own do a ton of damage. When one repents and truly turns to the Lord, we celebrate with them in their new faith. But that is pretty rare these days.

The tougher thing to deal with, the one who moves from orthodoxy to show us that they are apostates. Paul is talking to a group of pastors, and if they are going to do as he says they will, lure others away by "speaking perverse things," that means apostasy. Charles Ryrie defines that word for us, "apostasy is a departure from truth previously accepted and it involves the breaking of a professed relationship with God...There is an objective, well-understood, and previously believed standard of truth from which the apostates depart...The departure is willful. The very word implies it and the actions and life of apostates show it (particularly 1 Tim. 4). Thus apostasy involves both the mind and the will." (Ryrie 1964, 46)

Paul is telling this group of pastors, and us, that someone who is an apostate, they are a special type of heretic. An apostate is a heretic who actually knows better but yet, at the same time, is treated much more harshly in the scriptures than one who is simply a heretic. A heretic, like the false teacher who repents, when they hear truth, repent and believe it. The apostate won't.

In the New Testament, "the heretic was a carnal Christian who espoused error which brought factions into the church. Thus he was distinguished from an apostate who is not a Christian and whose departure was from the complete body of Christian truth which put him outside the church, rather than leaving him part of a faction within the church. In today's usage, probably heretic and apostate would be used interchangeably by most people. An apostate, according to the definition, would be different from a carnal Christian in that the latter is "in Christ" (1 Cor. 3:1) while the apostate is not." (Ryrie 1964, 47)

This is the troubling news we hear from Paul, and living in the last days as we do, we realize, yes, this is indeed going on all around us.

Acts 20:31–32

"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. And now I entrust 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." (NASB 2020)

Paul, very prophetically, sees where the greatest threats to the church will come from, it will come from within. Deception will be a key factor. Was he aware of Simony taking place? Possibly based on what he says next.

Acts 20:33–35

"I have coveted no one's silver or gold or clothes. You yourselves know that these hands served my own needs and the men who were with me. In everything I showed you that by working hard in this way 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.'" (NASB 2020)

We met Simon Magnus earlier in Acts 8. Remember him, he was the guy who thought spiritual things were for sale.



Welcome to a brand-new heresy that has continued on to today. This incident is the basis of the term “simony,” referring to the greedy attempt to purchase a spiritual reality falsely with money. (Osborne, Acts: Verse by Verse, Osborne New Testament Commentaries 2019, 162)

Simon never really did become a true follower of Jesus Christ. He put on the outward show, but he did become the originator of a heresy still rolling around today.

Simon’s sin is dreadfully accessible. In reducing the Holy Spirit to a magical power that could be purchased and dispensed for a fee, Simon shows that his interest in Jesus is finally only self-serving. Simon’s sin is, simply, the failure to acknowledge Christ’s claim over his world and life, hoping instead to fit Christ into his own self-directed agenda. (Perry 2025, 37)

And that is exactly what Paul is talking about here in verse 33. It is what we see taking place in some “fellowships” today.

Simon is the archetype of an apostate false teacher. He is greedy (2 Peter 2:3), bold and arrogant (2 Peter 2:10) and he is not interested in the truth, but cash (2 Peter 2:15). Was it Simon that Peter was writing about in 2 Peter?

In Simon’s eyes, monetizing the gospel and the Holy Spirit were the path for him to go back to the life he had and reestablish the prestige he once had.

Unlike what some teach and do today, the gospel is not a product. The word of God is not a thing to be marketed. And way too many apostate teachers and pastors today, who have finally shown us who they really are, shows us they intended to be nothing more than pitchmen. And how they go about doing this is reducing everything to marketing.

The gospel is a product, evangelism is about selling it, and church (pastoral) staffs are there to make it all happen. In the market-driven churches, this is preceded by market research that identifies the most likely customers. It turns out that these are not typically in the cities but in the suburbs, not the older suburbs but the newer ones, not among the poor but among the well-to-do middle class. Surprise! (Wells 2008, 51)

When we come to Christ, He is not there waiting to know what He can do for us next, rather, we should be the ones doing that for Him.

All you have to do today to experience Simony is send an email or text to the “right” ministry promising a large donation. Then sit back and watch what happens. There are still some out there that would turn around and mail you a miracle handkerchief or tell you they are praying for you with the same mass emailed message that went to 200,000 others on the same mailing list.

They turn you into a commodity that they want to “develop” with the right words and comfort all to get your credit card number.

The goal of ministry is not a full bank account for the ones doing the ministry, it is making disciples. But for the Simon’s of the world, it is.

Paul had already seen this spreading through the landscape; He had to deal with allegations earlier in Corinth. It is not all about butts in seats and tithes as I was told when planting this church, it is all about Jesus Christ.



Paul is clearly telling us here that the heart of a follower of Jesus, at all levels, is to have a heart for serving the flock of Jesus. It is not to market the flock. It is to love each other.

A pastor isn't a cowboy, he's not a CEO, he's not a rock-star celebrity; he's a shepherd. Faithful shepherds know the flock, care for the flock, pray for the flock, feed the flock, and protect the flock from wolves. We should be careful to build our philosophy of pastoral ministry, then, from the Bible—not from popular leadership books (though we can learn from them). Pastoral leadership is unique and important; therefore, let everyone who aspires to the office of the overseer do so with humility and dependence on the great Shepherd (Heb 13:20). He purchased the church with his own blood. (Merida 2017, 320)

When Paul quotes Jesus, he is paraphrasing the Lord. "The saying quoted in verse 35 is not found elsewhere in the New Testament, but is completely in character with Jesus' teaching in the Gospels. (Thus Mark 10:45 and Luke 22:27 might well be paraphrased, "It is more blessed to give service than to receive it.") The words of Jesus bring Paul's address to an appropriate conclusion." (Bruce, Acts: Bible Study Commentary 2017, Ac 20:28-38)

Acts 20:36–38

"When he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. And they all began to weep aloud and embraced Paul, and repeatedly kissed him, grieving especially over the word which he had spoken, that they would not see his face again. And they were accompanying him to the ship." (NASB 2020)

Most, if not all of those who were there, had become believers in Jesus because of the ministry of Paul. Paul loved the flock and he loved being with and encouraging those who were busy now taking care of the flock.

If you are not a follower of Jesus Christ, then you are not part of any flock. I would like to share a couple of things with you before we wrap up today just to let you know that we would love to see you be part of His flock.

Romans 3:21–24

"But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are. For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins." (NLT)

Romans 10:9–13

"If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. As the Scriptures tell us, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced." Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him. For "Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved."" (NLT)

ABC's of Salvation

- A. Acknowledge that you are a sinner, tell Him that.
- B. Believe that Jesus died on the cross for our sin and that He rose from the dead.
- C. Confess that Jesus is Lord. Tell someone about what you have done.



Works Cited

- Bock, Darrell L. 2007. *Acts, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.
- Bruce, F. F. 2017. *Acts: Bible Study Commentary*. Nashville, TN: Kingsley Books.
- . 1988. *The Book of Acts, The New International Commentary on the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.
- Gordon, A. J. 1893. *The Holy Spirit in Missions: Six Lectures*. New York, NY: Fleming H. Revell Company.
- Heiser, Michael S. 2025. *The Unseen Realm: Discovering the Supernatural World of the Bible*. Expanded Edition. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.
- Hitchcock, Mark, and Jeff Kinley. 2017. *The Coming Apostasy: Exposing the Sabotage of Christianity from within*. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale Momentum.
- Jennings, Willie James. 2017. *Acts, Belief: A Theological Commentary on the Bible*. First Edition. Edited by Amy Plantinga Pauw and William C. Placher. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press.
- Marshall, I. Howard. 1980. *Acts: An Introduction and Commentary, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*. Vol. 5. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
- McGee, J. Vernon. 1997. *Thru the Bible Commentary*. Vol. 5. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.
- Merida, Tony. 2017. *Exalting Jesus in Acts*. Nashville, TN: Holman Reference.
- Osborne, Grant R. 2019. *Acts: Verse by Verse, Osborne New Testament Commentaries*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.
- . 2017. *Romans: Verse by Verse, Osborne New Testament Commentaries*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.
- Perry, Tim. 2025. *When Politics Becomes Heresy: The Idol of Power and the Gospel of Christ*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.
- Ryrie, Charles C. 1964. "Apostasy in the Church." *Bibliotheca Sacra* 121.
- Tan, Paul Lee. 1996. *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times*. Garland, TX: Bible Communications, Inc.
- Wagner, C. Peter. 2008. *The Book of Acts: A Commentary*. Ventura, CA: Regal.
- Wells, David. 2008. *The Courage to Be Protestant: Truth-Lovers, Marketers, and Emergents in the Postmodern World*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.