

**Christians on Campus**  
**Acts Bible Study**  
**Summer 2020**

**Shepherding the Church of God according to God**

- I. In Acts 20, we see a picture of Paul's tender feelings for the believers in Ephesus, a church that he had not only raised up, but shepherded for three years.
- II. Paul shepherded the saints in Ephesus by teaching them "publicly and from house to house" (Acts 20:20) and by admonishing each one of the saints with tears even for as long as three years (vv. 31, 19), declaring to them all the counsel of God (v. 27).
- III. To shepherd is to take all-inclusive, tender care of the flock, to take care of all the needs of the sheep; we need to care for the Lord's sheep from the time they are regenerated to the time they meet the Lord.

**As you read**, highlight verses that show Paul's care for the believers in Ephesus.

**Acts 18:19-26**

*Paul's first visit to Ephesus*

<sup>19</sup>And they arrived at Ephesus, and he left them there; but he entered into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. <sup>20</sup>And when they asked him to remain for a longer time, he did not consent; <sup>21</sup>but taking leave of them and saying, I will come back to you again, God willing, he put out to sea from Ephesus. <sup>22</sup>And coming down to Caesarea, he went up to Jerusalem and greeted the church and went down to Antioch. <sup>23</sup>And when he had spent some time there, he went off, passing through the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, confirming all the disciples. <sup>24</sup>And a certain Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, an eloquent man, arrived at Ephesus, and he was powerful in the Scriptures. <sup>25</sup>This man was instructed in the way of the Lord, and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John. <sup>26</sup>And this man began to speak boldly in the synagogue. And when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him to themselves and expounded the way of God to him more accurately.

**Acts 19:1-12, 18-20**

*Paul's second visit to Ephesus*

<sup>1</sup>Now while Apollos was in Corinth, Paul, having passed through the upper districts, came down to Ephesus and found some disciples, <sup>2</sup>and he said to them, Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? And they said to him, On the contrary, we did not even hear whether there is a Holy Spirit. <sup>3</sup>And he said, Into what then were you baptized? And they said, Into John's baptism. <sup>4</sup>And Paul said, John baptized with a baptism of repentance, telling the people that they should believe into the One coming after him, that is, into Jesus. <sup>5</sup>And when they heard this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. <sup>6</sup>And when Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. <sup>7</sup>And there were in all about twelve men. <sup>8</sup>And he entered into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading them in the things concerning the kingdom of God. <sup>9</sup>But when some were hardened and would not be persuaded, speaking evil of the Way before the multitude, he withdrew from them and separated the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. <sup>10</sup>And this took place for two years, so that all those dwelling in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks. <sup>11</sup>And God did works of power of no ordinary kind through the hands of Paul, <sup>12</sup>so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were carried away from his body to the sick, and their diseases left them, and the evil spirits went out. <sup>18</sup>And many of those who had believed came, confessing and making known their practices. <sup>19</sup>And a considerable number of those who practiced magic brought their books together

and burned them before all; and they counted up the price of them and found it to be fifty thousand pieces of silver. <sup>20</sup>Thus, the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.

### **Acts 20:16-38**

#### *Paul's last meeting with the elders of the church in Ephesus*

<sup>16</sup>For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus so that he might not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hurrying so that if possible he might be in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. <sup>17</sup>And from Miletus he sent word to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church. <sup>18</sup>And when they came to him, he said to them, You yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, how I was with you all the time, <sup>19</sup>Serving the Lord as a slave with all humility and tears and trials which came upon me by the plots of the Jews; <sup>20</sup>How I did not withhold any of those things that are profitable by not declaring them to you and by not teaching you publicly and from house to house, <sup>21</sup>Solemnly testifying both to Jews and to Greeks repentance unto God and faith in our Lord Jesus. <sup>22</sup>And now, behold, I am going bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing what will meet me there, <sup>23</sup>Except that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in city after city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me. <sup>24</sup>But I consider my life of no account as if precious to myself, in order that I may finish my course and the ministry which I have received from the Lord Jesus to solemnly testify of the gospel of the grace of God. <sup>25</sup>And now, behold, I know that you all, among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom, will see my face no more. <sup>26</sup>Therefore I testify to you on this day that I am clean from the blood of all men, <sup>27</sup>For I did not shrink from declaring to you all the counsel of God.

<sup>28</sup>Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among whom the Holy Spirit has placed you as overseers to shepherd the church of God, which He obtained through His own blood. <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 you yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverted things to draw away the disciples after them. <sup>31</sup>Therefore watch, remembering that for three years, night and day, I did not cease admonishing each one with tears. <sup>32</sup>And now I commit 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 have been sanctified. <sup>33</sup>I have coveted no one's silver or gold or clothing. <sup>34</sup>You yourselves know that these hands have ministered to my needs and to those who are with me. <sup>35</sup>In all things I have shown you by example that toiling in this way we ought to support the weak and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive. <sup>36</sup>And when he had said these things, he knelt down with them all and prayed. <sup>37</sup>And there was considerable weeping by all; and falling on Paul's neck, they kissed him affectionately, <sup>38</sup>Especially pained over the word which he had spoken, that they would no longer behold his face. And they escorted him to the ship.

**1 Peter 5:2-3** <sup>2</sup>Shepherd the flock of God among you, overseeing not under compulsion but willingly, according to God; not by seeking gain through base means but eagerly; <sup>3</sup>nor as lording it over your allotments but by becoming patterns of the flock.

**John 21:16** He said to him again a second time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Shepherd My sheep.

### **Questions for discussion:**

1. Using the definition of shepherding in III., what is your experience both of being shepherded and of shepherding someone else?
2. In 20:28 Paul charges the elders of the church in Ephesus "to shepherd the church of God, which He obtained through His own blood." What is the church? What does this verse indicate about the preciousness of the church to God and to the apostle? What is your feeling toward the church? How can we cultivate such an intimate feeling?

3. Recall last week's Bible study on Christians experiencing persecution and suffering. Where in Paul's speaking does he mention this? How is even this speaking a shepherding of the believers?