



# CAPITOL COMMISSION™

## Paul's Priorities for Leaders

JUNE 5-7, 2019

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**Acts 20:29-38** *I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; 30) and from your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. 31) 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. 32) 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. 33) I have coveted no one's silver or gold or clothes. 34) You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my own needs and to the men who were with me. 35) In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner 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." 36) And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. 37) And they began to weep aloud and embraced Paul, repeatedly kissed him, 38) grieving especially over the word which he had spoken, that they should see his face no more. And they were accompanying him to the ship. (NASB)*

Who are these "savage wolves" who would come in to destroy the flock? Is the internal danger even greater than the external? What is the only imperative or command given in this passage? Does Paul reveal his only two power sources? How does he show that he was not in the ministry for money? Who are the benefactors of Paul's hard work? Is this the only place where we hear the direct words of Christ revealed only by Paul?

### FOCUS ON FUTURE BIBLE STUDY AND EVENTS:

- > JUNE 12-14: ACTS 21:1-6 PAUL APPROACHES HIS ARREST IN JERUSALEM
- > SEPTEMBER 13: LIFT-DELTAVILLE THE LEGISLATIVE INVITATIONAL FISHING TOURNAMENT

These words were spoken to the pastors who were leading the church at Ephesus and were heard by the pastors-in-training on Paul's mission team, thus the leaders and future leaders of the church. Paul was giving them the essentials, not only of his teaching, but also his example in ministry that verified his teaching. Paul only gave two commands in this farewell address and they are synonyms emphasizing the need for diligent awareness and watchful attention. The first command in verse 28, "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock" has a strong emphasis on the phrase modifying it, "to shepherd the church of God." The second command in verse 31 is the summation of Paul's speech, "Therefore, be on the alert." Their vigilant watch-care as leaders is most important!

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"WITH THIS PREDICTION OF THE EVILS WHICH WERE TO INVADE THE CHURCH AT EPHESUS AFTER PAUL'S DEPARTURE, MAY BE COMPARED TO THE DESCRIPTION OF ITS ACTUAL CONDITION MANY YEARS LATER IN THE EPISTLE OF THE SAVIOR TO IT, AS RECORDED BY JOHN (REV. 2. 2-7)."  
J. A. ALEXANDER

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"BEWARE OF FALSE PROPHETS, WHO COME TO YOU IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING, BUT INWARDLY THEY ARE RAVENOUS WOLVES." JESUS CHRIST IN MATTHEW 7:15

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### I. WARNING AGAINST ENEMIES ACTS 20:29-30

Paul had planted and led the church at Ephesus. As the shepherd of this flock he had already noticed the signs of the treacherous wolves who would seek to destroy the sheep. At the time that Paul said these words, the church

### BIBLE STUDIES

WEDNESDAY @ 8:00AM – BIBLE STUDY – FREDERICKSBURG – BOB EVANS ON RT. 3 & 10:30AM – WOODBRIDGE – BOB EVANS, 14490 SMOKETOWN RD.  
THURSDAY @ 7:00AM – BIBLE STUDY – SHONEY'S AT HULL & COURTHOUSE ALSO NOON-DIV. OF CAPITOL POLICE-TRAINING ROOM  
FRIDAY @ 7:00 AM – BIBLE STUDY – SUFFOLK – VILLAGE INN, 6116 COLLEGE DRIVE, NEAR HAMPTON ROADS CROSSING

# Virginia

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shared with the synagogue exactly the same Scriptures, the Old Testament. One possibility was the scholars of Scripture. These studied the Law, but rejected their only Messiah, Jesus Christ. While claiming to obey the Word of God, they were wolves in sheep's clothing, just as Paul had been before he was transformed by Jesus Christ. They only sought to fulfill the works of the law for their own righteousness, just as many today think that their own good works will get them to heaven rather than depending on the finished work of Jesus Christ in His death upon the cross for their sins. Even more dangerous than good-works wolves were those within the church perverting the truth to "*drag away disciples after themselves.*" These claimed Jesus as Lord, but they twisted the Scriptures and led others away from the truth.

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**"THE SPEAKER NOW TURNS FROM THE FUTURE TO THE PAST. THE TWO ARE DELIBERATELY MINGLED, AND UNITED BY THE WORD WATCH."**

**C. K. BARRETT**

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### **II. WATCH WITH ALERTNESS**      **ACTS 20:31-32**

Here Paul gives his second command as a summation of all he has said. "*Therefore be on the alert.*" The verb tense requires that this watchful alertness must be continuous. They must remember exactly how Paul had been their shepherd, "*remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears.*" The continual admonishing was the fruit of his diligent guarding of each individual lamb. The verb "*admonish*" means to warn, advise, teach or instruct. This was the primary verb Paul used to remind them of his ministry among them. What made Paul's warning so effective was his love for them made so evident through his "*tears.*" He wept for them as he warned them of their sin and of their reluctance to obey the truth. Paul had looked to the final end as a shepherd and saw their destructive patterns and warned them from it with all his heart, sobbing as he

pleaded with them to turn from their wicked ways and embrace the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ! It seems that Paul is wiping tears from his eyes as he demonstrates his continued love for them when he says, "*And now I commend you to God and the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.*" Paul will be gone, but God can and will care for them through His eternal Word. The Scriptures are sufficient as the means by which they will be built up and provided that heavenly inheritance among the saints.

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**"I FOUND IT NECESSARY TO WRITE TO YOU EXHORTING YOU TO CONTEND ERNESTLY FOR THE FAITH WHICH WAS ONCE FOR ALL DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS." JUDE 3**

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### **III. WORK WITH PRAYER**      **ACTS 20:33-38**

Paul reminds them of his work ethic. He was not in the ministry for the money. He reminded them that he had never coveted or desired anyone's "*silver or gold or clothes.*" Instead he had been "*working hard*" with his own hands not only to provide for himself and his team, but that literally "*it is necessary to help the weak.*" Equally necessary in the mind of Paul was to "*remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'*" Paul sought to earn what he could to help those (especially believers-Gal 6:10) who could not help themselves. This was the very reason why he was taking this trip to Jerusalem—to provide in time of famine for the weak and needy in the first church in the capital. Most likely Paul's earnings were part of that gift (Gal 2:10). Paul's final priority was prayer. "*He knelt down and prayed with them all.*" This was a men's prayer meeting where they were all overcome with tears, knowing Paul's fervent, genuine love for them had transformed their lives, and that they never expected to see him again.

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#### Questions to Ponder:

- 1) As a leader, who are you shepherding and what does your watch care for them look like?
- 2) Do you care enough to warn others of the path of sin and is your heart gripped enough to warn them with tears?
- 3) Are you characterized by prayer and the ministry of the Word of God so that you first minister to the helpless spiritually?