

**Text: Ac 20.18-35**

This afternoon, I thought it would be appropriate to do a summary message on Paul's farewell speech to the Ephesian elders.

We won't cover new ground, but we will put the whole message into some kind of perspective.

Read Ac 20.18-35

I called this message:

*Lessons about the Church*

I've made my outline out of four summary propositions, and with each one I have a one-word summary of the summary. Each of these ideas are important for church ministry.

In a way, these are just four ideas, or "mini-sermons" that I think we should think about as we move on past this farewell address by Paul.

**I. Courage: The church advances through fearless ministry (18-21)****A. Key phrases**

1. "serving the Lord ... with trials which came upon me through the plots of the Jews" (19)
2. "I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable"

**B. Key word: Courage**

"It is striking that Paul reminded the Ephesian elders of his trials through the plots of the Jews. The narrative of his Ephesian ministry in Acts does not relate any specific Jewish plot against him, although such plots occur frequently in the overall story of Paul's mission—at Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Thessalonica, Berea, and Corinth."<sup>1</sup>

1. Many plots, challenges, difficulties (through NT)
2. Church history filled with stories of opposition

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<sup>1</sup> John B. Polhill, *Acts*, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 424.

## II. Message: The ministry consists of solemn gospel testimony (21, 24)

### A. Key phrases

1. Repentance toward God (21)
2. Faith toward in our Lord Jesus Christ (21)
3. The gospel of the grace of God (24)

### B. Key word: Message

1. Stated solemnly

“to state something in such a way that the auditor is to be impressed with its seriousness.”<sup>2</sup>

2. The preaching of the NT is doctrinal and orthodox

## III. Opposition: Ministers must be aware and on guard against enemies (28-31)

### A. Key phrases

1. Be on guard, be on the alert
2. Watch for
  - a. Wolves without
  - b. Perverse speakers within

### B. Key Word: Opposition

<sup>1</sup> Tim 4.1-2 ¶ But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons,<sup>2</sup> by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron,

<sup>2</sup> Tim 3.1-5 ¶ But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come.<sup>2</sup> For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy,<sup>3</sup> unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good,<sup>4</sup> treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,<sup>5</sup> holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these.

<sup>2</sup> Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, ed. Frederick W. Danker, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

## IV. Dedication: The conduct of the ministry involves self-sacrifice (32-35)

### A. Key Phrases

1. “these hands ministered”
2. “I showed you that by working hard ... you must help the weak”

### B. Key Word: Dedication

<sup>1</sup> Cor 4.9-13 For, I think, God has exhibited us apostles last of all, as men condemned to death; because we have become a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men. <sup>10</sup> We are fools for Christ’s sake, but you are prudent in Christ; we are weak, but you are strong; you are distinguished, but we are without honor. <sup>11</sup> To this present hour we are both hungry and thirsty, and are poorly clothed, and are roughly treated, and are homeless; <sup>12</sup> and we toil, working with our own hands; when we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure; <sup>13</sup> when we are slandered, we try to conciliate; we have become as the scum of the world, the dregs of all things, *even* until now.

### Conclusion:

So, there you have it, some main ideas I think contained in Paul’s farewell message.

Each of these points will apply in our own circumstances in different ways, but they help us think about what concerned Paul for the churches as he looked forward into their future.