

Sermon Text Discussion 2/18/18

Acts 20: "Essential Marks of Pastoral Ministry" by Drew Hunter

Overview

The local church has been defined as the outpost of God's kingdom on Earth. God has given the responsibility of leading local congregations to leaders – elder, deacons, pastoral and administrative staff, ministry leaders, etc. In this section of Acts, we read Paul's instruction to the elders of the church in Ephesus; those with the pastoral responsibility for this local congregation. He outlines his vision for true pastoral leadership that is applicable to anyone in a position of intentionally making disciples. He shows us seven character qualities of those helping others follow Jesus.

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| 1. Steady Encouragement (v1-16) | 5. Careful Shepherding (v28-31) |
| 2. Servant-Minded Humility (v19) | 6. Generous Giving (v33-35) |
| 3. Gospel-Centered Teaching (v20-26) | 7. True Friendship (v36-38) |
| 4. Personal Integrity (v28) | |

Quotations

"Every member matters to God. Every member is precious to God. Every member has been died for by Jesus. They are true believers, true sheep, who have been purchased by Jesus." – Drew Hunter

"The purpose of scripture is to do us good." – John Calvin (of his role as a preacher of the Word)

Understanding & Application

- 1) The apostle Paul was an encourager. Share a time when you have been encouraged by an act or word from someone. Are you a good encourager? What would it take for you to improve in this area?
- 2) Drew noted that Paul writes 'I was serving the Lord with all humility'. Though he was serving others, his primary focus was on serving God. How should this attitude change our approach to service?
- 3) Personal integrity has been defined as doing the right thing when no one is looking. We have recently seen the dramatic fallout of those in the news caught and exposed for their lack of personal integrity. What areas are most tempting to you from an integrity perspective? What practical steps have you taken, or should you take, to remain a person of high personal integrity?
- 4) The metaphor of sheep and shepherds is used often in scripture. Find an example and share what it means to you. What does 'good shepherding' look like to you?
- 5) Are you surprised as you read about the emotional send-off of Paul from Ephesus? What do you think is the basis for this obviously close, personal friendship the Ephesians had with Paul? With whom do you have that sort of friendship? On what basis is it built? Why do you lack that depth of relationship with others?
- 6) We are all sheep (being pastored by a shepherd) and shepherds (helping others grow in their faith). Discuss steps you plan to take to become better sheep and better shepherds.