

“Declaring to You the Whole Counsel of God” (Acts 20)

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Acts 20:7-12 (ESV)

⁷ On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the next day, and he prolonged his speech until midnight. ⁸ There were many lamps in the upper room where we were gathered. ⁹ And a young man named Eutychus, sitting at the window, sank into a deep sleep as Paul talked still longer. And being overcome by sleep, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead. ¹⁰ But Paul went down and bent over him, and taking him in his arms, said, “Do not be alarmed, for his life is in him.” ¹¹ And when Paul had gone up and had broken bread and eaten, he conversed with them a long while, until daybreak, and so departed. ¹² And they took the youth away alive, and were not a little comforted.¹

This week I had a conversation with someone who asked me this question, “We have all these denominations: Baptists, Presbyterians, Methodists, Catholics. Are denominations Biblical?” That’s a good question to ask, and it seems that non-Christians and new Christians ask this question more than those who have been Christians for a long time. I told him that on one hand, the ideal is that there should be only one denomination: Christians. The apostle Paul, in his letter to the Ephesians, says of the church that there is “one body and . . . one Lord, one faith, one baptism” (Eph. 4:4-5). And on the night before Jesus died on the cross, he prayed to God the Father that his disciples “may be one, even as we are one” (John 17:11, 22). So, Christians should be united and should agree on what they believe and what they do.

But, I said, on the other hand, Christians are not perfect. They still fight against sin. That means that we are bound to disagree. We may read the Bible wrongly. And, added to that fact is the reality that within churches, there are many people who profess to be Christians who aren’t really Christians. The Bible warns us of this reality.² A real Christian is not someone who says they are born again, but someone who actually has been born again, someone who has been transformed by God and united to Jesus and who has the Holy Spirit dwelling within. So, if there are sinful Christians and non-Christians within churches, we should expect division.

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are taken from the English Standard Version (ESV).

² It would take too long to list all the passages of Scripture that speak to this reality, but we might start with some of these: Matt. 7:21-23; 13:1-9, 18-23 (the second and third types of soil produce seeds that appear to bear fruit for a time, but don’t last); John 10:1; Acts 20:29-30; 1 John 2:19.

Really, one of the major reasons why we have so many different denominations is that not all churches believe the Bible is God's written word in any meaningful sense. That is, they don't believe that the Bible is God's own revelation of himself. They don't believe that the Bible is the work of the Holy Spirit operating within different people, writing in different times and places and in different styles and genres, to produce what he wanted. They don't believe the Bible is completely true in all that it affirms and that it is unchanging throughout time.

Of course, there are denominations that believe these things and still have some differences because they don't agree on how to interpret the Bible. That's one thing. But so many churches clearly go against the Bible in what they preach and what they practice.

The reason I bring this up is because today, in Acts 20, we're going to see the importance of preaching and teaching. We're going to see the importance of not only preaching, but also practicing "the whole counsel of God," the true gospel, the real message of Christianity.

Before we take a look at the intriguing passage that was just read, we'll start with the beginning of the chapter. In the first six verses of Acts 20, we read about Paul's travel from the city of Ephesus to other provinces in the Roman Empire. Let's read those verses:

¹ After the uproar ceased, Paul sent for the disciples, and after encouraging them, he said farewell and departed for Macedonia. ² When he had gone through those regions and had given them much encouragement, he came to Greece. ³ There he spent three months, and when a plot was made against him by the Jews as he was about to set sail for Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia. ⁴ Sopater the Berean, son of Pyrrhus, accompanied him; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy; and the Asians, Tychicus and Trophimus. ⁵ These went on ahead and were waiting for us at Troas, ⁶ but we sailed away from Philippi after the days of Unleavened Bread, and in five days we came to them at Troas, where we stayed for seven days.

The book of Acts shows how the church grew from a small group of followers of Jesus in Jerusalem to a movement that spread throughout the Roman Empire. More than half of the book focuses on the work of Paul, Jesus' specially commissioned messenger. Last week, we saw that he was in Ephesus, where a mob was formed that tried to get Paul and his colleagues in trouble. After the crowd was dispersed, Paul spent some time with the Christians in that city, and then he went to visit other Christians. He traveled back to Macedonia, the province where he preached in the cities of Philippi and Thessalonica. And then we went to Greece, probably to the city of Corinth. Paul had a habit of visiting people who became Christians as a result of his preaching.

He wanted to encourage them to keep going in the faith. When Paul was in Corinth at this time, he wrote his famous letter to the Romans.

At the end of this period of time, Paul planned on sailing to Syria, probably to go to Antioch and then Jerusalem. But he heard that some other Jews were planning to kill him, probably on board the ship, away from Roman authorities. Instead of going on ship the whole way, Paul went back through Macedonia, to Philippi. Then he sailed to Troas, a city across the Aegean Sea from Macedonia. If you have a Bible that has maps in it, they can help you understand all the travels that Paul and his companions made.

Luke tells us that Paul was accompanied by a number of men who came from different parts of the Roman Empire where Paul had preached. It's likely that Paul and these men were going to deliver a financial collection taken up to help the impoverished Christians in Jerusalem. Each province that gave is represented by different men. They came to Troas first, while Paul and Luke (notice the "us") stayed in Corinth a bit longer to celebrate the Passover.

In Troas, Paul teaches on a Sunday. And something incredible happens. A man named Eutychus falls out of a window and dies, and Paul brings him back to life. Let's read verses 7-12:

⁷ On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the next day, and he prolonged his speech until midnight. ⁸ There were many lamps in the upper room where we were gathered. ⁹ And a young man named Eutychus, sitting at the window, sank into a deep sleep as Paul talked still longer. And being overcome by sleep, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead. ¹⁰ But Paul went down and bent over him, and taking him in his arms, said, "Do not be alarmed, for his life is in him." ¹¹ And when Paul had gone up and had broken bread and eaten, he conversed with them a long while, until daybreak, and so departed. ¹² And they took the youth away alive, and were not a little comforted.

The first day of the week is Sunday, also known as "the Lord's Day" (Rev. 1:10), because Jesus rose from the grave on a Sunday. We're told that a group of Christians gathered to "break bread," which may be a reference to the Lord's Supper. Clearly, they came together to worship. Part of that worship included Paul speaking.

At this point, we're told that a man named Eutychus started to fall asleep while Paul was talking. You may not know this, but at this time, people had to work on Sundays. The concept of having weekends, particularly Sundays, off from work didn't occur until later. So Christians had to work during the day and, at least in this case, worship together at night. Poor Eutychus was probably tired from work. It might have been hot in that upper room, which is why he was near

the window. And Paul talked for so long, that Eutychus drifted off, fell asleep, and fell out the window and died.

Now, I'm sure some of you think I preach long sermons. But I don't preach until midnight. And while some of you have a habit of taking naps during my sermon, I don't think my preaching has killed anyone. Yet. A couple of years ago, I read a book on preaching called *Saving Eutychus*. The subtitle says it all: "How to Preach God's Word and Keep People Awake."³ But we can't be too hard on Paul. He had a lot to teach the Christians in Troas and he didn't have a lot of time to spend with them. Also, he was able to bring Eutychus back to life. This miracle shows that Paul is following in the footsteps of Jesus and also Peter (Luke 7:11-15; Acts 9:36-41). But notice this: Paul kept teaching after Eutychus was revived. He went on until dawn.

Paul's situation might have been a bit unusual, because he had a limited time to spend with these Christians, but it shows the importance of teaching. Teaching the Bible can't be done in a short amount of time. It takes time. And even if Paul's situation was unique, we could look to the history of Israel in the Old Testament. At one point in their history, after they had been sent into exile because of their idolatry, they returned to the land. When they got there, they built a new temple and the rebuilt the walls of the city. And after that, there was a time of national repentance, of turning back to God and to his word. They gathered together to hear Ezra, the scribe and priest, read the book of the Law, which could have been the whole Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible, or at least parts of it. The law was read and explained from "early morning until midday" (Neh. 8:3).

We live in a different culture than fifth century BC Israel, or first century AD Troas. People have far shorter attention spans. Still, explaining God's word takes time. It doesn't happen in sound bites or tweets. It has been said, "This is the age of the sermonette: and sermonettes make Christianettes."⁴ Paul's teaching was so important that even a death and miracle couldn't stop it. Such things were mere interruptions to what was really important.

As something of an aside, I wonder if Eutychus's death and revivification serves also as a metaphor for what happens when people preach God's word. When someone truly is born again,

³ Gary Millar and Phil Campbell, *Saving Eutychus: How to Preach God's Word and Keep People Awake* (Kingsford, Australia: Matthias Media, 2013).

⁴ Michael Green, in the preface to John R. W. Stott's *Between Two Worlds: The Challenge of Preaching Today* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982), 7.

the old self dies, and a new self emerges. We're not told that Eutychus wasn't a Christian, and then became one. But the truth remains that when God's word is preached, death and life occur. Our old ways die and new life emerges.

Now on to the rest of the story: In the next few verses, we're told more about Paul's travels. Paul's companions went on ship from Troas to a city called Miletus. Paul went part of the way on land, and then rejoined his friends. Let's read verses 13-16:

¹³ But going ahead to the ship, we set sail for Assos, intending to take Paul aboard there, for so he had arranged, intending himself to go by land. ¹⁴ And when he met us at Assos, we took him on board and went to Mitylene. ¹⁵ And sailing from there we came the following day opposite Chios; the next day we touched at Samos; and the day after that we went to Miletus. ¹⁶ For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he might not have to spend time in Asia, for he was hastening to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost.

Again, if you have a study Bible that has maps in it, you can picture all of this a bit easier. Assos was a city in the province of Asia, in what is now Turkey. Mitylene was the capital city on the island of Lesbos. Chios was another island, as was Samos. Miletus was on the mainland. Sailing along the coast and around these islands took some time. Paul decided at first to stay on mainland, perhaps so he could spend more time either in Troas or in Assos. He also decided not to go into Ephesus again, perhaps because he would have to deal with more opposition there. Instead of going into that city, they sailed to Miletus. We're told that Paul wanted to get to Jerusalem before the feast of Pentecost, only seven weeks after the Passover.

Paul then sends messengers to Ephesus, to call the elders of the church to come see him in Miletus. And when they come, Paul speaks to them at length.

I'm going to go through this speech bit by bit, because it's long. Before I do that, I want us to know that this is one of the three major speeches that Paul gives in the book of Acts. The first is to a Jewish audience at a synagogue in Antioch in Pisidia (Acts 13:16-41). The second is to the men of Mars Hill in Athens (Acts 17:22-31). Here, Paul speaks to the leaders of a church. So from Paul we have three speeches: one is an evangelistic sermon to a Jewish audience; another is a speech that sets forth the Christian worldview to Gentiles; and the third speech is to Christian leaders. We learn something different from each speech, and the fact that there are three different audiences explains why Paul makes different points in each one.

I also want you to notice, as we go, how often Paul uses words that describe preaching. In verse 20, he says, "declaring" and "teaching." In verse 21, he says, "testifying." He says "testify"

in verse 24. In verse 25, he says, “proclaiming.” In verse 26, it’s “testify” again. In verse 27, it’s “declaring.” In verse 30, he says in the church “will arise men speaking twisted things.” It’s clear that much of Paul’s ministry involved speech, whether it was preaching in a more formal setting or teaching people individually.

So, with that in mind, let’s read verses 17-21:

¹⁷ Now from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church to come to him. ¹⁸ And when they came to him, he said to them:

“You yourselves know how I lived among you the whole time from the first day that I set foot in Asia, ¹⁹ serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials that happened to me through the plots of the Jews; ²⁰ how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house, ²¹ testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

You get the sense when you hear this speech that Paul had great affection for the church in Ephesus. He loved them. He worked hard for their sake. Even though the unbelieving Jewish people in the city wanted to do harm to Paul, he served the Lord “with tears and with trials.” Even though Paul faced opposition, he didn’t back away from preaching “anything that was profitable.” When I hear that language, I think of 2 Timothy 3:16-17, which says,

¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

I think it’s reasonable to assume that Paul meant that he taught all of Scripture. If he taught daily in the hall of Tyrannus for two years (Acts 19:9-10), he could have worked through a lot of the Old Testament.

And notice that in verse 21, Paul says he preached to both Jews and Gentiles the gospel. He told them of their need to repent, to turn from their old, sinful lives, and to turn in faith to Jesus. That’s how anyone is right with God. Anyone—Jew, Gentile, American, foreigner—must turn from their old ways, and they must trust Jesus. Our whole problem as human beings is that we are born with the tendency to turn away from God and to turn toward sin. So, God the Father sent his Son, Jesus, to live a life of righteousness. He’s the only one who never turned away from God. And though he was innocent, he died on the cross to pay for our sins. Now, everyone who turns to Jesus and away from selfishness, worshiping false gods, and sin, is reconciled to God.

The Bible doesn't say a person needs to pray a certain prayer or do certain works in order to be saved from God's wrath. But the Bible consistently speaks of repentance and faith.

Now let's move on to verses 22-24:

²² And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there, ²³ except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me. ²⁴ But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

Somehow, Paul knew that his life was being guided by the Holy Spirit. He knew he had to go to Jerusalem, though he didn't know what would happen when he got there. He also says that the Spirit told him that he would be imprisoned and afflicted in many cities. It's possible that the Holy Spirit spoke to Paul through other people. We see that happen in chapter 21 (vv. 4, 10-14). At any rate, Paul isn't afraid. He seems to know he's going to die for his faith. He says that his life isn't valuable to himself, though he knew it was valuable to God and he knew that he helped other people. What he wanted to do more than anything else is "finish [his] course and the ministry that [he] received from the Lord Jesus," which was "to testify to the gospel of the grace of God." That was Paul's goal. That was his agenda.

Let's read verses 25-27 to see what Paul says next:

²⁵ And now, behold, I know that none of you among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom will see my face again. ²⁶ Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all, ²⁷ for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.

Paul knows he won't have the opportunity to be with these elders again. But he doesn't despair. When Paul was in Ephesus, he did his job. He declared the whole counsel of God. That's why is "innocent of the blood of all." That idea comes from the prophet Ezekiel. God told him to warn Israel of impending judgment. If Ezekiel warns the people of God's judgment and they don't act, then their blood is on their head. But if Ezekiel fails to warn the people, their blood is on his head (Ezek. 33:1-9). Paul is saying he didn't fail to teach the people the truth. Paul always did that. That's why he is innocent. What the people did with the truth is up to them.

What is "the whole counsel of God"? It can be translated "the whole purpose of God" (NASB) or "the whole will of God" (NIV). We might say it's the whole gospel, the good news that is focused on the person and work of Jesus. But to understand who Jesus is, and what he did,

we have to understand the basic story of the whole Bible. Now, Paul might not mean that he preached through every single passage of the Old Testament. I doubt he did that. But he taught all the parts of the story told in the Old Testament, and he taught how that story was fulfilled in Jesus. He didn't have the New Testament in front of him, as it was still being written, but his teaching included the important doctrines of the New Testament.

That is important because so often the gospel is watered down. Many churches teach true things, but their problem isn't so much what they teach. No, it's what they fail to teach. Some don't like to talk about sin that much. Some don't talk about judgment. These are the harder truths that must be taught when talking about the whole gospel. Paul didn't water down the truth, and neither should we. Of course, some churches add to the gospel. They add rules, saying that Christians must use this translation of the Bible, or must do this and not do that. Legalism is another way of corrupting the gospel.

Let's move on to the next few verses. I'll read verses 28-32:

²⁸ Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. ²⁹ I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; ³⁰ and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. ³¹ Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every 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.

Here, Paul is warning these church leaders. Before we think about the warning, I want us to notice that Paul is teaching the elders of the church in Ephesus, but he also calls them “overseers,” and he tells them to care for “the flock.” In other words, they are also shepherds. These three words—elders, overseers, and shepherds—refer to one office in the church. We usually call this office “pastor.” That's another word for “shepherd.” The model in the New Testament that we see is several elders or pastors in each church. These are the men who preach and teach, who lead and oversee, who care for the flock and keep out the wolves.

(It's interesting to note that the Greek word translated as “elder” is *presbyteros*⁵ and the Greek word translated as “overseer” (and sometimes as “bishop”) is *episkopos*.⁶ Presbyterians

⁵ Πρεσβυτερος.

⁶ ἐπισκοπος.

have a “session” of elders who lead each church, and Episcopalians have bishops that oversee multiple churches. There are other differences between these denominations, but it’s interesting to see how these denominations interpret the role of church leaders. In reality, all pastors are elders and overseers/bishops. Or, all elders are pastors and bishops, and all bishops are elders and pastors. The terms are synonymous and refer to the same office.)

In verse 28, Paul says that these men were made elders by the Holy Spirit. This is not an office that just anyone can fill. Only those men whom God has chosen can serve in this capacity. That is because they are entrusted with the care of “the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.” That’s another verse that teaches that Jesus is God. God bought the church with his own blood when the God-man, Jesus, died on the cross. He died for the church, for all who would come to him and put their trust in him. This is a precious group of people in God’s sight, and they need to be cared for. So Paul tells the elders to be careful. They need to pay attention to their own behavior as well as the church. (See also 1 Tim. 4:16: “Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.”)

The reason why these elders need to be careful is that “fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.” It seems that these “wolves” come from outside the church. And there are also going to be people inside the church who will be “speaking twisted things, to draw the disciples after them.” That suggests that the wolves are false teachers. What Paul seems to be saying is that there are going to be false teachers outside the church, and false teachers are also going to rise up within the church.

In three of Paul’s letters, 1 and Timothy and Titus, he writes quite a bit about preaching and teaching and caring for the church. But Paul also writes a lot about false teachers.⁷ Some of you may know this and some of you may not, but beginning in the nineteenth century, some scholars started to doubt that Paul wrote these letters. Their arguments are quite weak, in my opinion. We don’t have manuscripts that say these letters were written by someone else, nor do we have historical witnesses making those claims. I find it interesting that some scholars try to get people to doubt that Paul wrote the letters that speak the most about the importance of correct theology and practice in the churches.

At one point in these letters, In 2 Timothy 4:3-4, Paul writes,

⁷ 1 Tim. 1:6-7, 19-20; 2:12-14; 4:1-3; 5:15; 6:3-5; 2 Tim. 2:14-19; 3:1-9; 4:3-4; Tit. 3:9-11.

³ For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, ⁴ and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.

There have always been people like this, and there will be people like this until Jesus returns to judge and renew the world. That means that church leaders will always have to guard and keep their doctrine and their churches from lies. A false teacher doesn't have to look like a wolf. He may wear a suit and a tie and a big grin and tell people what they want to hear in a soothing voice. A real elder may seem difficult and mean, but will tell you the truth because he loves you and he loves God. Looks and perceptions can be very wrong.

How are these elders supposed to protect the church? Paul tells them in verse 32: He commends them to God and to his word of grace. God is the one who is able to guard and keep them (1 Pet. 3-5) and his word is able "to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all who are sanctified." God's word, when applied by the Holy Spirit, builds Christians up and leads them to inherit all the promises of God. God's people will inherit the earth, when Jesus returns and restores God's creation.

The reason why we take the Bible seriously is that it's God's written word. It teaches us about God. It builds us up and equips us. It gives us an inheritance. Of course, all this doesn't happen for anyone who ever happens to pick up a Bible. But when the Holy Spirit applies God's word to God's people, it has a powerful effect. That's why I take time in my sermons to explain God's word. That's why I don't tell a lot of stories and jokes. Those things can help keep people's attention, but they won't cause you to inherit anything. So many churches don't spend time really teaching God's word, and that is a shame.

Let's finish Paul's speech by reading verses 33-35:

³³ I coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. ³⁴ You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my necessities and to those who were with me. ³⁵ In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' "

Paul knew that his ministry was more than simply speaking. The rest of his actions had to line up with his message. Here, Paul maintains his innocence and integrity. He didn't covet anyone's money or cloths. He worked hard to provide not only for his needs, but also the needs of those who worked with him. In other words, Paul wasn't a taker; he was a giver. He quotes an

otherwise unknown saying of Jesus, one that has become very famous: “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” His words are similar to what Peter writes when he writes, in 1 Peter 5:1-3,

¹So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed:
²shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; ³not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.

If our message doesn't change our behavior, either the message is false or we really don't believe it. It's just empty words. Paul practiced what he preached, and we need to do the same.

After Paul finished his speech, he said goodbye to the elders in Ephesus and he departed. We see that in verses 36-38:

³⁶And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all.
³⁷And there was much weeping on the part of all; they embraced Paul and kissed him, ³⁸being sorrowful most of all because of the word he had spoken, that they would not see his face again. And they accompanied him to the ship.

As I said at the beginning of the speech, we can see how much love Paul had for these men. He prayed with them. He wept with them. They embraced him and kissed him goodbye. They were sorrowful because they would not see him again.

Do you know how Paul expressed his love for these men? He taught them about God. Do you know how a pastor expresses love for his congregation? He teaches them about God. Specifically, he teaches the Bible. Some of us remember the story of what happened with Jesus and Peter. When Jesus was arrested and put on trial, Peter denied knowing Jesus three times. After Jesus died and then rose from the grave, he asked Peter three times if he loved him. Each time, Peter said “yes.” After each “yes,” Jesus said, respectively, “Feed my lambs,” “Tend my sheep,” and “Feed my sheep” (John 21:15-17). What does Jesus mean? Jesus means that Peter and all other elders who follow him are supposed to feed the “lambs” the word of God. And they tend the flock by leading, feeding, and protecting the flock from the wolves who come with false teaching.

I hope by now you see the centrality of preaching and teaching God's incarnate Word, Jesus, and his written word, the Bible. It's impossible for us to know God unless God has revealed himself in his Word (Jesus and also the Bible). So, let me ask you: Do you know the gospel message? Do you understand it? Are you able to share it with others? Do you know the

Bible? Do you understand it? And, more importantly, has it changed you? Has it changed the way you live?

We must be careful to guard and keep the message of the Bible, particularly the central truths of what we call the gospel. That means we need to know this message backwards and forwards. It means we need to know the Bible. And it means that my job is to help us believe and act rightly. It's my job to teach you truth and to protect you from lies. I often do that by telling you what lies are out there, and by refuting them. I should also serve as an example to you.

We should also see in all of this that Paul was willing to die for this message. What about us? What are you willing to die for? What is the course that you have received from God? Paul knew his life's purpose and he followed it, no matter the cost. Are we doing the same?