

WEEKLY REFLECTION

At this point in Acts, Paul is nearing the end of his life. The gospel has made its way through Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria—even swaths of Asia, just as Christ promised. (Acts 1:8)—and yet Paul shows no sign of slowing down.

If anything, this week's passage of Acts 20:17-38 speaks to Paul's immense love for Christ and his impeccable character: he admits that he knows nothing about what awaits him in Jerusalem (v.22), yet recounts the constant trials he has faced in his attempts to preach the gospel. (v.19) It is almost certain that Jerusalem will be no different, as the Spirit testifies to him in each city of the imprisonment and affliction that await him (v.23), but he cares not for his own life. He wants only to complete the mission God has given him. (v.24)

Even so, there is immense love in his heart for the people God has called him to. Knowing that it would be the last time for those from the church of Ephesus to see him, Paul gathered the elders of the church to him and shared with them his final testimony. (v.17) As he recalls how he served the Lord amongst them with all tears and humility (v.19), how he did not hesitate to speak to them the truth (v.20-21), and how his heart and mind were focused fully on the things of God and His commandments (v.33-35); he urges them to be "imitators of me, as I am of Christ." (1 Cor. 11:1)

And what of you, church? As you set out to follow Christ, can you say that you have sought to imitate Paul—or even better yet, Christ—in all things? What is the call or mission that God has given you to shepherd or steward? Have you listened? Have you obeyed? How are you being called higher to know, love, obey, and enjoy Him in all things? Will you listen? Will you obey?

QUESTIONS

QUESTION ONE:

Was there a moment where you felt you could do better than someone in charge, only to realize later on that leadership is much harder than it looks?

QUESTION TWO:

Paul describes his life as a course and a ministry that he received from Christ. (v.24) Is there anything that you feel the Lord has called you to, whether at church, at work, or with friends and family? What are some “wolves” (v.29) (e.g. ego and pride, misplaced priorities, distractions etc.) that might cause you to veer from what God has called you to?

QUESTION THREE:

Apart from distractions that can cause us to veer off-course, Paul emphasizes in this passage the importance of humility: humility in his calling, humility in his work, and humility that he shows to the people he ministers to.

As you meditate on what it is that the Lord has called you to, what would change if you viewed this calling as something you received from the Lord to testify to His goodness, instead of something you maintained for your own sake? What is a practical way that you can practice and show humility to someone whom you might find difficult to love this week, and how can your group encourage you in doing so?