

## Acts 20:18-38 A look at Ministry Past, Present and Future – Part 3

**Last night I was blessed to be able to go and see the Mira Costa College Latin Jazz Orchestra – led by our very own Mario Gonzalez.**

**A)The group was absolutely incredible!**

**B)Sax Players/ trumpets/ trombones / Keys/ percussion/ Electric Guitar / Gabby ripping on the bass! REALLY COOL.**

**C)I especially appreciate it – little Jealous – because I don't have a musical bone in my body.**

**1)Play a mean – radio – sort of sing in the Shower.**

**Everybody sounds better, right?**

**D)But an orchestra is consist of Diversity – Different instruments – and Unity – all those instruments blending together. = Beautiful music**

**As I sat there last night I thought this band is a great picture of the Church. – THE BODY OF CHRIST.**

**A)In a body – you have different members w/ different functions – not all an eye. / Arm / leg**

**B)What makes a body is the Diversity – mixed with the Unity. –Every member does it's part.**

**1)How weird would it be if my hand decided it wanted to be the center of attention.**

**C)All the parts working together is what makes a body healthy – beautiful music – that is the Church**

**Here in Acts 20 Paul is meeting with a team of Elders/ leaders from the Church in Ephesus.**

**A)Mini Leadership conference – they have come to meet with him in**

## Miletus – last time

**B) Paul is sharing with them in this final section that their continued success and effectiveness will depend upon their Working together.**

**C) We have seen Paul talk with them in V.18-21 about **the Past** – His ministry there**

**1) Then in V.22-27 **His Present** approach to ministry as a Runner – finish the race with Joy!**

**D) Today – V.28-38 – The Focus is on the Future – their future. God's Plan for them.**

**Read V. 28-38**

**Terms Elder, Pastor, and Bishop are used interchangeably in the NT to describe the same office.**

**A) Elder- describes the **MAN**– Mature in the things of the Lord.**

**B) Bishop describes the **MINISTRY**– Overseer**

**1) Pastor describes the **METHOD** – Feed & care for or Shepherd.**

**D) Relevance for you today: **Who are you called to oversee?****

**1) Who are you called to feed and take care of?**

**Home group/ family/ team/ work crew/ students**

**What Paul says here has great application not just for those who are called to Ministry.**

**A) But to anyone who is called to oversee and to take care of a group of people.**

**B) Paul begins V.28 - **Take heed to yourself and to all the flock.** Notice order**

1) **First, take heed to yourself!** = “•Keep watch over yourselves.•”

**Bb)The importance in this for those who want to be used by the Lord is not to have a priority on self / but for preparation of self.**

1)Heart and life prepared for the calling!

C)If I am going to be one who is *effectively, consistently* ministering to others - I need to be cultivating *my own walk with Lord*

1)If I am going to be one whom the Lord uses to Bless others - I must first be one - Who is being blessed by Jesus!

**Guy went on business trip to France while there picks up a present for his wife .**

**A)Trinket box glow in the dark ( Doesn't work ) directions are in French/**

**B)His wife has a friend over who happens to speak French – she reads words on the back this needs to sit in the sun for it to glow.**

**C)If we are going to be those who will effectively shine as lights in this dark world we need to sit in the Son Light / Presence of the SON!**

**D)Your own Devotional life – Prayer life.**

**1)Amazing Jesus wants you to spend time with him!**

**Luke 6 called them to himself – first – ministry 2<sup>nd</sup>**

**Dd)The Priority will Not be on ministry/ but on the master letting ministry come from overflow - touching your sphere of influence.**

**So first Take heed to self:** because if you're in right relationship with the Lord, blessings will flow through you to the **flock of your family**, to the Sunday-school kids you teach, to the people to whom you witness.

**D) See what I am will so often directly reflect what those around me - will eventually become!**

**So Paul says to these guys - first, take heed to self./ Second, take heed to the flock which *H.S.* has made you overseers.**

**A.) Paul is pointing out to elders - *H.S. placed you there!***

**B) Last week we talked about how everyone of us – has a race to run- God has placed you in a race – Marriage/ family, Job, ministry.**

**C) He has placed you on planet earth and in a particular sphere of influence for a reason. – Not by chance – not a number**

**1) Knows your name – hairs -**

**D) I am the Pastor of this Church because God placed me here. Brian Called.**

**Paul is reminding these men – that their calling was from God- He placed them there.**

**A) Their call was to Shepherd – to Feed the Flock – to care for the Flock – to be there for the flock. –**

**B) And Paul reminds them of how Precious the Flock of God is. **shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.****

**C) The Church is important to God because His name is on it *The church of God* / Important to the Son - because His blood was shed for it**

**D) And it is important to the Holy Spirit because He is calling & equipping people to minister in it !**

**Notice again the Phrase *the church of God - which he purchased with His blood!***

**A) Proof text for Deity of Christ/ whose church?/ Church of God - God's Church which he purchased w/ his blood.**

**B)But Who shed His blood? Jesus / Therefore this verse is a proof text that Jesus is God!**

**C) AND - You being a part of the Church are His purchased possession !**

1)You are special & loved! Bought with a price!

**D)Salvation; IS free gift - not cheap - cost Jesus His blood!**

1) Joy set before Him endured the cross!

**E)Here today – you haven't received him – Today is the day!**

**So take heed – watch out for yourself and for the Flock.**

**A)Watch out for two things!**

**B)#1 V.29 Watch out for wolves that will come in from the outside not sparing the flock or seeking to take advantage of the flock.**

**C)Wolves in sheep's clothing – they look like a sheep – but underneath the exterior – is wolf.**

**D)You can always tell a wolf –by what they eat. – Wolves eat sheep!**

1)Prey on the sheep –take advantage of sheep!

**Want your money – they want your allegiance – A)Charlatans who have given the Church a bad – name – Wolves**

**B)Men who will use Jesus for personal gain. – Watch out for those guys.**

## {Paul's day – Today!

**#2 V.30,31 Watch out for men who are among you who will rise up – Men who are in your midst – who have their own agenda.**

**A)Speaking perverse things – drawing attention to themselves {Perverse = twist or distort the truth.**

**B)Many cult leaders – started in the Church – even know how to quote the Bible – recent examples – Jim Jones – David Koresh**

**C)If someone is constantly pointing you to themselves and not to Jesus – Run**

**D)So Paul says watch out for there are Dangers around us –Wolves seeking to come in / Dangers among us – men with ulterior motives.**

**The Shepherds job is not just to feed the sheep but it also is to warn the sheep. { Fattening up Kill**

**A)Warn about false teachers & false teaching –**

**B)Isn't that a bit judgmental – narrow – why can't we just be tolerant.**

**Think of it this way:**

Years ago, an eight-and-a-half-foot Burmese python escaped in Medford, Oregon. When hungry, he was capable of eating small animals or even babies.

Now lets pretend that happened in a neighborhood here in Vista - and I said “Folks, there's an eight-and-a-half-foot python slithering around **and I know where he is.**

But I don't want to offend or frighten anyone unnecessarily, so I won't be too

specific in telling you his location.” **You’d think I was crazy! / SICK**

**Or what would you think if I took a bottle of poison – and said – Poison is such a negative word. – Doesn’t sound nice**

**A)I will re-label it – Alternative beverage. – You would have me arrested**

**B)If you saw someone – getting ready to drink a bottle of poison – you would scream – put that away – it will kill you.**

**C)It is the Shepherds responsibility to warn the sheep – Poison it will kill you! – Expect that!**

**31 Therefore watch, {Stay on the lookout} and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.**

**Paul gives these men that he loved three things to Remember about their calling in order to minister well.**

**A)We will finish up with this morning**

**1<sup>ST</sup> Remember the Goal. V.32**

**2<sup>ND</sup> Remember to stay Pure in your motives V. 33,34**

**3<sup>RD</sup> Remember to stay Generous in your service.V. 35**

**1<sup>ST</sup> Remember the Goal. V.32**

**A)I commend you to God and to the word of His Grace.**

**B)Commend = to place along side- I lay you down beside God. – Beautiful picture**

### **C) Commend you to God – picture of Prayer!**

- 1) Paul knew this church and these leaders were going to face difficulties –
- 2) He in his heart – placed them before God! – Prayer

### **D) Great word for parents of teens} – Just pray!**

### **E) That really is the goal of ministry – get you to Jesus and to his word!**

- 1) Methodist Minister –

## **The Word of his grace builds you up and Sanctifies**

### **Justification vs Sanctification**

**32 "So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.**

**A) The word of His Grace – that is such a great description of the Word of God – The word of His....**

**B) This is the goal of ministry – get pp to Jesus and to His word.**

**C) Help them experience the grace of God!**

## **Grace is at the heart of Salvation – Work of Christ**

**A) Grace been saved - God in his grace – Undeserved favor sent Jesus to come and do for us what we could not do for ourselves. Lost separated / deserving wrath**

**B) Grace is the Opposite of the Law -**

**1) The law says Do – but The Word of His grace- DONE! Religion vs Relationship**

**C) The law condemns – Grace reminds us that we are forgiven.**

**1) We have an inheritance**



## 1 Peter 1:4-5

**“an inheritance that is incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you.”**

**The law shows us our weakness – Grace becomes our strength!**

**Lord said to Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:9 - "My grace is sufficient for you my Power is made perfect in your weakness!"**

**A) My grace is sufficient! It is sustaining;  
it strengthens - it gives me hope!**

**B) What is interesting is the Lord spoke these words to Paul after Paul prayed about thorn in flesh - 3 times. Sickness**

**C) This word came to the apostle - quieting his life - turmoil into peace**

**D) Lord saying Paul, I know what is going through very difficult, but it is necessary through it I will reveal my grace sufficient**

**E) Paul's suffering - became his song! Glory in trib - glory in suffering - when weak - strong!**

**So often in ministry or service, parenting or discipling, we tend to emphasize what man should do rather than what God has done.**

**A) In Ephesians 4–6, Paul stressed the behavior of the believer—**

**B) But not until after he had spent chapters 1–3 telling us we're blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, that we're in Christ, that we have been adopted and sanctified.**

**Paul spends the first 3 Chapters telling us of what God had done before he spoke of what man should do.**

**A) I can say to my kids or to the people to whom I'm ministering, “Read your**

Bible. Worship. Pray.

**B)And they'll do it out of obligation for a day or two.** 1)But once they begin to understand that they are loved unconditionally, that they are in Christ, that their sin, past, present, and future, is washed away

C)Then they will worship and pray, witness and serve not because they *have* to but because they *get* to.

**Remember the goal – get pp to Jesus and to his word**

**A)That they would see him and fall in love with Him – discover just how incredible is his grace.**

**#2 Remember to stay Pure in your motives. V.33,34**

**A)Paul said when I was with you I didn't covet anyone's gold or silver – I wasn't in it for the money. Monetary gain**

**B)But I worked with my hands – Doesn't mean that a minister shouldn't get paid a salary – Paul taught a workmen is worthy of his wages**

**C)But that can't be the motivation – Willing to work**

**D)Motivation is serve Jesus! – Not money/ power/ popularity or position.**

**Covetousness – wanting what someone else has can mess with your motives**

It has been rightly said that the happiest person is not the one who **has** the most, but the one who **needs** the least.

A young bride flashed her diamond ring at the party. It was the biggest rock anyone in attendance had seen. “Wow,” they said. “Where did you get that diamond?”

**“This is the famous Rabinowitz diamond, the second largest diamond in**

the world,” she said. **“But it comes with a curse.”**

“A curse?” asked her friends.

“Yes,” she answered. “It comes with Mr. Rabinowitz.”

**How many of you have discovered that things that are flashy and shiny come with a curse?**

**A) Once you get them, you’ve got to maintain them, worry about them, and keep track of them.**

**B) Paul was free from the curse that accompanies material possessions because they were no longer important to him.**

**C) For that reason he was able to serve with Pure motives**

**#3 Remember to stay Generous in your Serving.** Knowing this it is more blessed to give than to receive. V.35

**A) This is something that is so foreign to us – really don’t understand – until you engage in it for the right reasons.**

**B) Right reasons – At this time of the year - People give gifts – to get gifts**

**C) Men because we can be preoccupied with sex – will give back rub or do the dishes – or whatever – hoping – reward in the bed room.**

**Human sinful nature gives to get**

**A) But it is the nature of Jesus – that gives to just to give – gives to those who can’t give back – can’t return it –**

**B) Parents realize – Christmas – joy of giving – the smile on your face.**

**C) Not only is there a holy satisfaction – but there is also a special blessing**

**1) God rewards givers -**

**D) God gave – The Greatest gift – His Son –**

## **1) Gift that blesses us - Salvation**

**John 3:16-17** For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. 17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.