

Developing a Heart for Ministry

Acts 20.17-21

The book of Acts seems to contain a lot of “stuff” that happens. When we look around today at modern Christianity, a lot of that “stuff” is no longer around. This raises an interesting question in my mind. What is the stuff we are supposed to be doing as Christians?

Certainly, God wants our heart. Of course, we always need to seek God, read his Word, and pray, but isn't there more to do after that? There is. We are to become fully devoted followers of Christ. That means we must follow. We must do something. And the something we must do is to become engaged in ministry. What we do in ministry may differ, but that we do something is not an option, it is imperative!

Serving the Lord with Humility, Tears, and Trials

“From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church. When they arrived, he said to them: ‘You know how I lived the whole time I was with you, from the first day I came into the province of Asia. I served the Lord with great humility and with tears, although I was severely tested by the plots of the Jews. You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house. I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.’” Acts 20.17-21

The Book of Acts is a fast moving account of the spread of the Gospel through the Roman Empire in the first thirty years after Christ's resurrection. But now and then Luke stops his fast moving story and let's us hear a sermon. Now why were these words so important?

*‘You know how I lived the whole time I was with you, from the first day I came into the province of Asia. **I served the Lord...**’ 20.19*

The first thing that Paul wants to say about his work is that he was serving the Lord.

Acts 20.18-21 is one sentence in the original. It's Paul's way of spelling out how he served the Lord. In fact there are at least eleven characteristics of serving the Lord mentioned here. Let's keep our Bibles open and look at three of Paul's illustrations this morning.

1. Serving the Lord means **HUMILITY**.

*“**I served the Lord with great humility...**” 20.19a*

2. Serving the Lord means **TEARS**.

*“**I served the Lord with great humility and with tears...**”*

“Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.” 20.31

3. Serving the Lord means **TRIALS**.

*“**I served the Lord with great humility and with tears, although I was severely tested by the plots of the Jews.**”*

Serving the Lord is Better Than Life

“And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me--the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace.

Now I know that none of you among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom will ever see me again.” Acts 20.22-25