

# Does Paul's Example Inspire You?

Sunday 5/12 at 8:00 & 10:45 | Monday 5/13 at 7 PM

Third Sunday of Easter – 2019

**Introduction:** Dear friends in Christ: **Most importantly** – *Jesus is our Savior from sin, death, and hell; to a lesser degree – Jesus is our ultimate example of humility, obedience, love, and service! For salvation, we have everything we need in Jesus! For living our lives in Christ, we have Jesus' example, as well as that of St. Paul, who is our focus today.*

On Paul's third missionary journey, he had spent three years in Ephesus – *proclaiming law and gospel, and training men to be pastors. Now, in today's text from Acts 20*, Paul will meet those pastors again for a *final time*: **<sup>17</sup> Now from Miletus [whose ruins are located on the west coast of Turkey] [Paul] sent to Ephesus [about 30 miles away] and called the elders [pastors] of the church to come to him. [In various churches today, the term "elder" is used in many ways, but the basic Biblical meaning is "pastor."]** **<sup>18</sup> And when they came to him, he said to them:**

1. **Trials, Truth, Repentance:** **"You yourselves know how I lived among you the whole time from the first day that I set foot in Asia, <sup>19</sup> serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials that happened to me through the plots of the Jews; <sup>20</sup> how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house, <sup>21</sup> testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. // As Paul spoke with those men, he reminded**

them about his ministry among them: ✦how he was unselfish, ✦how he shed tears over those rejecting Jesus, and ✦how the Jews tried to oppose him. Also, Paul did not hold back on his teaching – *even though doing so is natural in the face of hurt or loss*; but, instead, he fearlessly testified to everyone who would listen about “**repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.**” Repentance ✦is a God-worked sorrow for sin and faith ✦is a God-given trust in Jesus as our Savior! May the Lord always continue to ➡*keep us sorry* and ➡*keep us trusting in Jesus!!*

2. **Fully Committed to Christ:** <sup>22</sup> **And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained** *[having been bound]* **by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there,** <sup>23</sup> **except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me.** <sup>24</sup> **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** *[service]* **that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.** <sup>25</sup> **And now, behold, I know that none of you among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom will see my face again.** <sup>26</sup> **Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all,** <sup>27</sup> **for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.** // For most of us, we ✦are sorry for our sins, ✦trust in Jesus, and ✦want to honor Him; however, *we also tend to set limits* ☹! We may say: ☹I’m sorry for these sins, *but I want to continue in those*; ☹I trust in Jesus for heaven, *but I trust in my money for retirement*; ☹I am willing to hear the gospel, *but I am not willing to share it with others!* Such things are NOT GOOD and were NOT

TRUE OF PAUL; instead, he was very determined to FULLY live for Christ – *no matter imprisonment, pain, or even death!* In other words, he loved Jesus MORE than he loved his own life! Therefore, *as a faithful servant*, he proclaimed ALL OF GOD’S WORD – “every doctrine and every truth of God, omitting, altering, toning down nothing” (Lenski, 845-846)! By doing so, *he was innocent of others* – since he had fully told them God’s truth; if they didn’t listen, *that was on them and not on him!*

3. **Instructions and Inheritance:** <sup>28</sup> Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers [*ones who watch over the spiritual welfare of others*], to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. <sup>29</sup> I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; <sup>30</sup> and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. <sup>31</sup> Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears. <sup>32</sup> 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. // For pastors / overseers – “the former stressing the honor, the latter the type of work” (Lenski, 848), they are called FIRST to apply God’s Word to *their own lives*; THEN to *the ones in their flock*. And they should see their flock as precious – *remembering that Jesus purchased those people with His very own blood!* Also, Paul warned that men FROM AMONG THEM would ✦rise up, ✦pervert the truth, and ✦try to pull believers away from Jesus. Lenski noted: “One fang [of a fierce

wolf] or false doctrine may cause faith to bleed to death” (851). And then Paul, *knowing that he would no longer be around*, pointed those pastors to God and His Word to build them up now and give them life eternal with all who have already died in Christ!

4. **A Powerful Example:** <sup>33</sup> I coveted [sinfully desired] no one’s silver or gold or apparel. <sup>34</sup> You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my necessities and to those who were with me. <sup>35</sup> 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.’” // The Bible DOES permit that those who serve as pastors can receive their living from their flock; however, *Paul chose to earn his own money and did not desire the possessions of those he served*. He did that to inspire all of us to live by this statement: “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” Our old nature loves to receive, but our new nature loves to give to those in need! By God’s grace and power, may our new nature dominate our lives unto God’s glory!

**This Week’s Challenge:** Choose just one example set by Paul; *then apply it to your life!*

**Let Us Pray:** Dear Jesus, as Paul was so fully committed to living for You, *so may his life inspire us to be different to the Father’s glory and the benefit of others!* In Your holy name!