

McCoy Memorial Baptist Church

Date: June 7, 2020

Title: "A Charge to NT Church Leaders"

Text: Acts 20:17-38

#### INTRODUCTION:

1. The setting of the passage is Paul's third missionary journey.  
DATE: A.D. 53-57 ... COVERAGE IN ACTS: Acts 18:23 - 21:17
  - A. Ministry in Ephesus (2 years; 3 months)
  - B. Visiting churches in *Greece* (Macedonia & Achaia)
  - C. Stop in Miletus (20:15-16) before heading to Jerusalem
2. In Acts 20:17-38, Paul's message to Christian Leaders.
  - A. A review of Paul's **past** 3-year ministry in Ephesus (vv. 18-21)  
He reminded the elders of his example (18-21, 31-35). There had been a degree of thoroughness about it, which left his conscience clear.
    - 1) He had been thorough in his \_\_\_\_\_.
    - 2) He had been thorough in his \_\_\_\_\_.
    - 3) He had been thorough in his \_\_\_\_\_.
  - B. A description of his **present** situation (vv. 22-27)
  - C. The **future** responsibility of the elders (vv. 28-35)

There are two realities they needed to face:

#### THE \_\_\_\_\_ REALITY (20:28)

1. He drew their attention to "the flock" (twice: vv. 28, 29)  
Never underestimate the great importance of the church!
  - A. To God the Father: His name is on it ... "the church of God"
  - B. To God the Son: He "purchased it with his own blood"
  - C. To God the Spirit: "the Holy Spirit has made you overseers"

2. He reminds them that they are "overseers"
  - A. Overseers:  
The word is **ἐπίσκοπος (epískopos)**. Greek in derivation, emphasizing the responsibility of the office (literally: "to oversee")
  - B. Elders:  
"Overseers" are called "elders" **πρεσβύτερος (presbúteros)** in vs. 17. A Jewish/Hebrew background, stressing the dignity of the office.
3. Their supreme task is to "shepherd" the church of God
  - In carrying out this role, shepherds have different functions. See First Timothy 5:17. Some elders/overseers "rule" or "direct the affairs of the church." And there are those whose work is "preaching and teaching" (cp. Ephesians 4:11 "Pastor-Teachers").
  - The pastoral/shepherding responsibility in a congregation was/is shared by deacons (though in a supportive/assisting role; Phil. 1:1 & 1 Tim. 3:1-13).

### THE \_\_\_\_\_ REALITY (20:29-30)

Paul warned the leaders of the dangers they had to recognize and deal with if they were to protect and lead "the church of God." There are . . .

1. Dangers \_\_\_\_\_ us (20:29)
2. Dangers \_\_\_\_\_ us (20:30)
3. Dangers \_\_\_\_\_ us (20:31-35)  
i.e., carelessness, shallowness, covetousness, laziness, & selfishness!

### MAKING IT PERSONAL

1. Cultivate a deeper **appreciation** for the congregation of MMBC.  
See 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17
2. Take the "inevitable reality" (vv. 29-30) **seriously**.
3. **Pray** for your **Leaders**.  
Your "overseers/elders" and those who assist (deacons) in shepherding!
4. Have a greater **commitment** to Biblical truth that will enable us to detect and defeat dangerous trends and unbiblical doctrines.
5. Like the apostle Paul, is your **service** for Jesus reflected by the words untiring, unrelenting? If not, why not (see 1 Cor. 15:58).