



# Take Heed

**"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28).**

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"Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. 27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. 28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. 29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. 31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. 32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified. 33 I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. 34 Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. 35 I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive. 36 And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all. 37 And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him, 38 Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship" (Acts 20:26-38).

In our last study we saw Paul, while in his journey from Ephesus towards Jerusalem, having a stopover at Miletus, from where he sent for the Elders of the

Church at Ephesus to admonish them. We considered the initial part of his admonition in verses 18-27. In this study we take a closer look at the rest of the admonition from verses 28-38. These are very relevant to us in contemporary times.

In this section of his admonition, Paul concentrated on instructing these church leaders to take heed to themselves and to the flock of God. These are paramount to our success in life and Ministry. Please note and apply the following points:

## **1. Taking Heed of Yourselves:**

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves..." (Acts 20:28a). Paul, speaking to the Ephesian elders, underscores the primacy of self-vigilance. Before one can guide others, introspection and spiritual health must be paramount. We must daily evaluate our spiritual condition, ensuring that we do not falter in our walk with Christ. Note the following scriptural admonitions on taking heed:

- ♦ Proverbs 4:23 instructs: "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."
- ♦ I Timothy 2:14 "And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." (Satan targeted Eve who was a helpmeet for Adam !)

- ♦ Luke 22:31-32: "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." (Satan target Peter who had received prophecy of becoming a pillar in the church !)
- ♦ 1 Corinthians 10:12: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

## **2. Taking Heed of the Flock:**

"...and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers..." (Acts 20:28b). Shepherds are entrusted with the welfare of their flock. Elders and leaders in the church must watch over their congregation, guarding them against spiritual dangers and nurturing their growth in the faith. Therefore, "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind." (1 Peter 5:2).

## **3. The Threat of False Teachers:**

"For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." (Acts 20:29-30). Paul warns of the imminent threat posed by false teachers. These "grievous wolves" can lead many astray with their deceptive doctrines. As stewards of the faith, we must be ever vigilant, discerning the truth and protecting our community from such perversions. "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." (Matthew 7:15).

## **4. The Role of God's Word:**

"And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified" (Acts 20:32). Paul commends the Ephesian elders to the Word of God, which is foundational to spiritual growth and sanctification. The Bible is our primary tool for instruction, correction, and building up our faith. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." (Psalm 119:105).

## **5. The Example of Paul's Ministry:**

"I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel... I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:33-35). Paul sets an example of selflessness and hard work, emphasizing the virtue of giving rather than receiving. We are called to emulate Paul's dedication, supporting the weak and embodying the words of Christ. In Philippians 2:3-4 we are commanded "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."

## **Conclusion:**

Taking heed, as Paul articulates, is crucial at multiple levels: of ourselves, our community, the threats we face, and the guidance of God's word. By looking to Paul's life, we learn the importance of vigilance, dedication, and selflessness in our spiritual journey. May we be ever watchful and diligent as we fulfil our calling in Christ Jesus.