

Text: Acts 20:1-36, Title: Marching Orders, Date/Place: The Road, 10/15/17, AM

A. **Opening illustration:**

B. Background to passage: As we will read, Paul is heading back to Jerusalem for Pentecost, making short stops on the way. In this chapter we see many team members from all over the Mediterranean world serving with him. He wants to speak to his Ephesian elders, but does not have time to travel to Ephesus, so he asked them to come down to the more coastal town of Miletus, so they could see him again, and he could give them some final instructions. This is probably the most thorough treatment of the duties and relationships of the elders to the church in t, but this is there is so much more here about the life and ministry of Paul as an apostle and as a believer. So much to cover, such an important text.

C. Main thought: We are going to look at the most significant points of Paul's ministry

A. **Living Out His Faith (v. 17-27)**

1. He served the Lord day and night with tears (affection/passion) through many trials. His joy in the Lord empowered and enabled him to endure suffering. He did not even consider his own life his own, but the Lord's who bought him. In this willingness to suffer and even die, he was able to maintain a pinpoint goal to complete his gospel advancing ministry. He was faithful to share with them the gospel of God, which he defines here as repentance and faith. He twice that he refused to hold back anything that is profitable, then the entire will of God.
2. Argumentation
3. **Illustration: Judy Calsing**
4. Now, let's not use the excuse/crutch that Paul was an apostle, and a super-Christian. This lifestyle described here was not anything that isn't expected of all believers. In fact, in a piece written by a church planter and author, the sooner we teach new believers a lifestyle of witnessing, the more likely they are to continue that as a pattern for their lives. The advance of the gospel should be primary, even other suffering and death. We are not our own. However, we cannot do this on our own; therefore, Paul commends them to God and his gospel for enablement.

B. **Instruction and Exhortation (v. 28)**

1. This is the central verse in the passage. He begins to do currently what he has already reminded them of, instruct and teach. He is exhorting the elders to do a couple of things, and a couple of great truths are found in the backdrop that we should not overlook. He tells them to pay careful attention to themselves. Next, he tells them to take care of the flock. There is an indication here, and later that heretical and divisive times/people will come, even possibly the temptation is already presenting itself. Backdrop issues: trinitarian witness, interchangeable use of overseer/elder/pastor terminology, and atonement.
2. Argumentation
3. **Illustration:**
4. There is a sense here that he is specifically speaking to these elders, but these are truths for you and I as well. You cannot take care of others spiritually until you take care of yourself. The pursuit of holiness, pursuit of God, and the sanctification of mind and body are key and prerequisite to aiding and caring for the spiritual growth of others (disciple-making). There has been a mindset created in the church for thousands of years that the clergy alone is in charge of the body. Not completely true, the church is in part the keeper of "one another." Now, this is not to say that the elders/pastors do not have a heightened or specific charge, because here we do see where the Holy Spirit has made them overseers. Let us make special effort to encourage one another and instruct each other, especially as it relates to spiritual danger as this text indicates, in the Christian life.

C. **Loving People (v. 32-38)**

1. Just as Jesus had done Paul loved his team, God's churches, and those who led them. Over and over in his letters, he spoke of his affections for his beloved children in the faith, and how he was like a loving mother and a caring father to them. Here we see how he loved them, and they loved him. The weeping and hugging because they would never see him. Interesting that they put emphasis on not seeing him, instead of his impending suffering or death. They did not leave his side until he got on the boat, and we can picture a sight of them watching as his boat sailed out of the harbor and out of sight.
2. Argumentation
3. [Illustration:](#)
4. In this passage, this powerful love for each other is an example. Jesus said love one another as a command. John wrote chapters about loving each other, even to the point of saying that if you do not love your brother, then you are not truly a believer. Look around. How would you evaluate the level of friendship you have with those in these chairs? How about other Christians in your life? The gospel engenders a common bond, we allow the Holy Spirit to bring forth the love.

D. **To the ends that:**

1. The Kingdom is proclaimed.
2. Testimony given to the gospel of grace
3. Church built up

A. [Closing illustration:](#)

B. Recap

C. Invitation to commitment

Additional Notes

- **Is Christ Exalted, Magnified, Honored, and Glorified?**