SWARTZ FBC LEADER DISCUSSION GUIDE

SCRIPTURE: Acts 20:17-38

SERIES: Stand Alone Message

TITLE: The Church, Shepherds, and the Chief Shepherd

BIG IDEA: God places shepherds among His people as a blessing to care for them and point them to Christ.

TEXT

17 Now from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church to come to him. 18 And when
they came to him, he said to them:
"You yourselves know how I lived among you the whole time from the first day that I set foot in Asia,
19 serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials that happened to me through the plots of
the Jews; 20 how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in
public and from house to house, 21 testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of
faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. 22 And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not
knowing what will happen to me there, 23 except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that
imprisonment and afflictions await me. 24 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 that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the
gospel of the grace of God. 25 And now, behold, I know that none of you among whom I have gone about
proclaiming the kingdom will see my face again. 26 Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of
the blood of all, 27 for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God. 28 Pay careful attention
to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church
of God, which he obtained with his own blood. 29 I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in
among you, not sparing the flock; 30 and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted
things, to draw away the disciples after them. 31 Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did
not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears. 32 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. 33 I coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. 34 You yourselves know that these hands
ministered to my necessities and to those who were with me. 35 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.' "
36 And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. 37 And there was much
weeping on the part of all; they embraced Paul and kissed him, 38 being sorrowful most of all because of
the word he had spoken, that they would not see his face again. And they accompanied him to the ship. [1]

[1] *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2025), Ac 20:17-38.

v.17-27

1. GOD GIVES ELDERS FOR GOSPEL CENTRALITY

- What does Paul say is the ministry he received from the Lord?
- Why do you think he talks about affliction?
- What does he say that he testified both to Jews and Greeks?
    - Why is this significant?
- How do we apply Gospel centrality to our lives today?
- How do we continue to focus on the centrality of the Gospel as God's people?

v.28-35

2. GOD GIVES ELDERS TO CARE FOR HIS PEOPLE

- Why does Paul tell the elders to pay close attention to themselves, then to the flock?
- What does it mean for elders/shepherds/overseers to care for the church of God?
- What are the fierce wolves Paul is talking about?
- What does it mean for us to practically be alert spiritually?
- What do we see in verse 32 that Paul says, "is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance"?
    - What is the significance of this for our lives?

V.36-38

3. GOD GIVES ELDERS TO BE A BLESSING TO THE CHURCH

- Why is this such an emotional moment for Paul and the elders?
- What does this tell us about their care for the church and for each other?
- What does this reveal about the weight associated with shepherding and leading?
- What does this reveal about our need for Gospel Community?