

Sun Morning

A GENEROUS LIFE

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Text: Acts 20:17–38 ~ Paul's last sermon at Ephesus

“And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church. 18 And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, 19 Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews: 20 And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house, 21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. 22 And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: 23 Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. 24 But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. 25 And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. 26 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 20:17-38)

- In 13:5 Jesus washes Disciple's feet at Last Supper

INTRODUCTION

- Generosity of self giving different from "pathological generosity"
 - * pathological generosity giving away (charity) to point of starving family & not providing for family
- Generosity of self giving in balance with family responsibility
"Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me." (1 Corinthians 4:16)

1. LIVE WITH A SERVANT-LIKE Humility

a. Paul served the Lord with all humility

- he even served with tears & under many trials

b. Servant steward of Lord Jesus

"Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ," (Romans 1:1a) bond slave

"For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." (Galatians 1:10)

"Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ," (Philippians 1:1a)

"...for without me ye can do nothing." (John 15:5b) - Jesus speaking

2. LIVE WITH A SACRIFICIAL Heart

a. Paul suffered many physical miseries in service of Christ

- with age, comes miseries of old age

b. 2 Cor 11:28 Paul also responsibility of all the Gentile churches

"...in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. 24 Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. 25 Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; 26 In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; 27 In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." (2 Corinthians 11:23a-27)

Paul's physical suffering

"Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. 11 For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. 12 So then death worketh in us, but life in you." (2 Corinthians 4:10-12)

"I die daily." (1 Corinthians 15:31b) - *physical dying & daily self sacrifice*
"From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." (Galatians 6:17)

3. LIVE WITHOUT SELFISH *Hunger*

a. Paul never desired any person's *money or wealth*
- he worked to support himself
(Acts 18:3)

b. Rom 15:1 *Strong carry weak's burdens*

most important thing = "And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." (Luke 12:15)

self lovers "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. 2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous," (2 Timothy 3:1-2a)

CONCLUSION

- *Christian service to other people to bring them to Christ*

Jesus "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." (Matthew 20:28)
service he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Philippians 2:8b)

