

**Valley Bible Church**  
**Sermon Notes for September 10, 2017**

**The Resources in Church Ministry**  
**Acts 20:32-38**

Acts 18:23-21:16 details Paul's third missionary journey which centered on the city of Ephesus. Acts 20:17-38 records his final visit with the leaders of the church of Ephesus with the central charge to guard the flock (20:28).

**1. Confident dedication (20:32)**

Paul committed the Ephesian leaders to the Lord. Likewise, our ministry is entrusted to the grace of God to produce His intended purposes.

The Scripture is described as the means of God's grace to build us up in the faith. Our ministry must be through the teaching of the Bible if we are truly going to grow as believers.

While church leaders are called to protect those under their care (20:28-31), it is God who is able to work through them to build up His people in the faith. Ultimately, all believers—those sanctified or “set apart”—will receive the inheritance, which is eternal life in God's kingdom (Matthew 19:29; 25:34; Acts 26:18; 1 Cor. 6:9-11). We can trust that God will deliver what He has stored up for His people.

**2. Coveting disavowed (20:33)**

Paul served as an example to the Ephesian leaders. His testimony of not being covetous was an example unlike the Jewish leaders who opposed Jesus (Mark 11:17).

Part of guarding the flock of God includes protecting the church from people who seek to use church members for their own personal gain.

**3. Commanded discretion (20:34-35)**

After Paul joined Aquila and Priscilla in their tent-making business in Corinth, they moved it to Ephesus (Acts 18:3, 19). Working to provide for your needs and for sharing with others is an underappreciated means of serving the Lord.

While the words “it is more blessed to give than to receive” are not recorded elsewhere in the Scripture, they were certainly a well-known teaching of Jesus. There are many things that Jesus said that are not recorded for us in the Bible, but all that is recorded is what God considered sufficient for our faith and practice.

The reason it is more blessed to give than to receive is because resources on earth are temporary while resources in heaven are eternal (Matthew 6:3-4, 19-21).

Note that Paul directed the words of Jesus to church leaders. Churches ought to be more concerned with their giving than they are with their receiving.

The intent of the giving by the church leaders was to “help the weak.” This exhortation is repeated by Paul in 1 Thessalonians 5:14. Helping involves financial assistance, but who must be helped? The weak Christians lived by unnecessary rules and regulations. (1 Corinthians 8-10; Romans 14-15). Our responsibility as a church is to use the resources that God has entrusted us with to minister to those who are weak in faith.

#### **4. Compelling departure (20:36-38)**

The emotional farewell by the Ephesians comes from not only their care for Paul, but also their concern for his well-being (21:23-24). The affection by the Gentile Christians stands in contrast to the hatred of the Jerusalem Jews.

May our care for our fellow believers be such that they genuinely miss us when we are gone.