

## Paul's Integrity

Text: Acts 20:17-21

### **Introduction:**

Paul is heading back to Jerusalem, aiming to be there by Pentecost. He has passed by Asia and stopped at Miletus, where he has called the Ephesian elders to come to him. It is here that he gives a heartfelt plea, which exposes many critical theological principles that especially address the heart of a gospel minister.

We began looking at the opening words of this plea last time, and we will continue to trek forward this morning, hopefully reaping some of the great fruits found herein.

### **I. Paul's Integrity**

"From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church. And when they had come to him, he said to them: "You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you, serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews..." (vs. 17-19)

Question #1: Paul here describes his consistent demeanor among the Ephesians from the beginning. He begins by stating that he had served the Lord among the Ephesians with "all humility." What is humility? What does that look like for Paul, among the Ephesians? What would be the temptation for such a one as Paul as he ministered among these people? How could he have maintained a spirit of "all humility?" [Consider Ephesians 4:1-4 & Paul's thorn in the flesh]. Apply this to us.

Question #2: Paul spoke of serving among the Ephesians with "many tears." What types of things might have provoked these tears? What does that teach us about Paul? Apply this to us.

Question #3: Paul also faced some of his most difficult trials in Ephesus, brought about mostly by the plotting of the Jews. Why does Paul mention this now? [His example]. How does this add weight to the quality of "all humility," which Paul has exemplified among the Ephesians?

Question #4: What does the fact that Paul's greatest opposition came from the Jews, speak (if anything) to the Ephesians?

"...how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (vs. 20-21).

Question #5: What does the first portion of these verses indicate about the Gospel ministry? How does this reflect on mainstream evangelicalism today?

Question #6: What does Paul reveal here about true shepherding? Why is this necessary?

Question #7: What is the two-fold charge of the Gospel according to Paul here? Why is this important? Apply to today.

Question #8: What is repentance and why is it directed toward God?

Question #9: What is faith and why is it directed toward Jesus Christ?

Question #10: How do these things speak to Paul's integrity? What risks are involved in this type of ministry (if any)? Apply this to us. [Paul's purpose in leaving them an example]