

“Paul’s Farewell”
Cornerstone Church of Poway
Pastor Rich Sherwood
October 5th, 2025

Acts 20:17-27

17 From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church. 18 When they arrived, he said to them: “You know how I lived the whole time I was with you, from the first day I came into the province of Asia. 19 I served the Lord with great humility and with tears and in the midst of severe testing by the plots of my Jewish opponents. 20 You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house. 21 I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus. 22 “And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. 23 I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. 24 However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God’s grace. 25 “Now I know that none of you among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom will ever see me again. 26 Therefore, I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of any of you. 27 For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God.

Notes:

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on its right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.

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Acts 20:28-32

28 “So guard yourselves and God’s people. Feed and shepherd God’s flock—his church, purchased with his own blood[h]—over which the Holy Spirit has appointed you as leaders.[i] 29 I know that false teachers, like vicious wolves, will come in among you after I leave, not sparing the flock. 30 Even some men from your own group will rise up and distort the truth in order to draw a following. 31 Watch out! Remember the three years I was with you—my constant watch and care over you night and day, and my many tears for you.

32 “And now I entrust you to God and the message of his grace that is able to build you up and give you an inheritance with all those he has set apart for himself.

Acts 20:33-35

33 “I have never coveted anyone’s silver or gold or fine clothes. 34 You know that these hands of mine have worked to supply my own needs and even the needs of those who were with me. 35 And I have been a constant example of how you can help those in need by working hard. You should remember the words of the Lord Jesus: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

Notes:

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

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Read: Acts 20:17-27

In verses 18-21, Paul reminds the Ephesian elders of everything he did with them: preaching, teaching, serving. What does this tell us about what true leadership looks like?

How does Paul’s example challenge us to evaluate our own commitment in the communities we serve?

Verse 19 says Paul served “with great humility and with tears.” That’s not easy. Why is humility essential for leaders?

In verse 24, Paul says, “I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me.” What does it mean to live with that kind of clarity of purpose?

Do you have a “task from the Lord” you feel called to finish?

Paul warns them of “savage wolves” coming in among the flock (v.29-30) and of people twisting the truth. What are the dangers of compromise, especially in spiritual and moral leadership?

How do we guard against losing the message God has entrusted to us?

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32-33, Paul “commends them to God and to the word of his grace,” and he points out that he gave without selfish gain. Why is integrity in giving—of time, resources, energy—so vital?

How does generosity undergird trust and credibility?

Paul’s tearful farewell (v.36-38) shows profound love and sorrow. What do these emotions teach us about compassion in leadership?

How do you balance strength with vulnerability?

Reflect on Paul’s charge to “keep watch over yourselves and all the flock” (v.28). What does “watching over” look like in your own life or church?

How do we stay alert, engaged, and accountable in following Jesus?

Finally: If Paul were speaking to you today, what is the “race” or “task” he would call you to commit to finishing for Christ?

What step can you take this week to move forward in that calling—boldly, faithfully, unashamedly?