

The Unstoppable Gospel
24. The Weak and the Wolves (Acts 20v17-38)

John Percival

Introduction

- *The pastor's job description?*
- **Three concerns** for the watchman-shepherd (v28):

The wolves (v29-31)

The weak (v33-35)

The Word (v32)

Conclusion

Acts 20v17-38 (NIV)

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. ²⁸ Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. ²⁹ I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. ³⁰ Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. ³¹ So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.

³² “Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. ³³ I have not coveted anyone’s silver or gold or clothing. ³⁴ You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions. ³⁵ In everything I did, I showed you

that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

³⁶ When Paul had finished speaking, he knelt down with all of them and prayed. ³⁷ They all wept as they embraced him and kissed him. ³⁸ What grieved them most was his statement that they would never see his face again. Then they accompanied him to the ship.

Ambassador Church Promises

As Christians, we believe that we were dead in our sins and deserving of God's wrath; but because of his great love and mercy God has given us new life in Christ. In Christ we are forgiven, accepted, and adopted by God. All this is through God's incomparable grace and is only received by faith. In view of God's mercy to us we make these promises in dependence on God and the work of his Spirit in us.

We promise to grow in the knowledge of God:

- We will give thanks and praise God for his goodness to us
- We will seek to repent of our sin and rejoice in our forgiveness
- We will celebrate our new life in Christ and walk humbly with God
- We will seek the guidance and leading of the Spirit of God in everything we do
- We will live a life that honours God in obedience to his Word
- We will express our dependence on God in prayer
- We will give God glory for all his work in us and in the world

We promise to grow together as a community of God's people:

- We will endeavour to meet together regularly
- We will make every effort to keep the unity of the church as those whom Christ has reconciled
- We will forgive each other as Christ forgave us
- We will embrace our responsibility to love, care, and pray for each other as God's family
- We will use our gifts to encourage and build each other up
- We will contribute to the church's financial support
- We will respect and honour the leadership of the church

We promise to go into the world with the good news about Jesus:

- We will bear witness to the good news of the gospel through our words and actions
- We will welcome new people into the life of the church
- We will seek to do good to all people to show the love of God
- We will accept suffering for the sake of the gospel
- We will pray for the spread of the gospel throughout Hong Kong and across the world
- We will, if we move from this place, as soon as possible unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of these promises and the principles of God's Word.