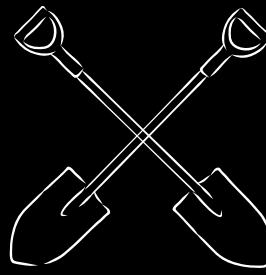


DIGGING DEEPER



SUNDAY STUDY RESOURCE



“Shape the Shepherd, Shape the Church”
ACTS 20:17-38 NKJV

SYNOPSIS

Before a pastor can faithfully lead and shepherd the Church, he must first allow God's Word to shape his own life. Continuing in the second half of our verse by verse study through the book of Acts called “Full Send,” Pastor Tim teaches a message from Acts Chapter 20 entitled “Shape the Shepherd, Shape the Church” that includes 5 takeaways from God’s Word that we can apply in our lives.

A shepherd must...

- 1) Let the Word transform him before he teaches it
- 2) Let the Word determine his priorities, not his desire for comfort
- 3) Declare the whole counsel of God without compromise
- 4) Use the Word to guard himself and the flock from deception
- 5) Entrust the Church to God and His Word.

We hope this message encourages you to recognize the importance of biblical leadership, remain grounded in the truth of God's Word, and allow that truth to continually shape your life as you faithfully follow Jesus.

KEY VERSE:

“These who have turned the world upside down have come here too.”

ACTS 17:6 (NKJV)



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Text: Acts 20:17–21

Cross-References: Hebrews 4:12–13; 1 Corinthians 11:1; James 1:22–25; Psalm 139:23–24; 2 Timothy 3:16–17

Discuss: In Acts 20:18–21, Paul reminds the Ephesian elders how he lived and ministered among them. Why do you think Paul emphasizes his character, humility, perseverance, and teaching rather than simply listing his accomplishments? What does this reveal about the relationship between a person's life and their ministry?

Text: Acts 20:22–24

Cross-References: 1 Corinthians 9:24–27; Galatians 1:10; Matthew 16:24–26; 2 Timothy 1:7–8; Philippians 3:7–14

Discuss: In Acts 20:22–23, Paul knows that suffering and imprisonment await him in Jerusalem, yet he continues forward. What does this reveal about the difference between following God's direction and pursuing personal comfort?

Text: Acts 20:25–27

Cross-References: 2 Timothy 3:16–17; 2 Timothy 4:1–5; Galatians 1:6–10; Ezekiel 33:7–9; John 8:31–32

Discuss: In Acts 20:26–27, Paul declares that he is innocent of the blood of all people because he did not shrink back from proclaiming the whole counsel of God. Why does Paul connect his responsibility to teach God's Word faithfully with his accountability before God?

FAMILY DISCUSSION *(Questions for your middle-school or high-school children)*

Text: Hebrews 4:12; James 1:22–25; John 17:17–18

Cross-References: Psalm 119:9–11; Romans 12:1–2; Matthew 28:19–20; 2 Timothy 3:16–17

Discuss: Looking back over Acts 20:17–38, which of the five responsibilities challenged you the most: allowing the Word to transform you, prioritizing faithfulness over comfort, declaring the whole counsel of God, guarding against deception, or trusting God and His Word? Why?

REFLECTIONS

1) When you read the Bible, are you genuinely allowing it to examine your heart, or are you primarily looking for verses that encourage you, confirm what you already believe, or help you understand someone else's shortcomings? Identify one area of your life where you have been more willing to evaluate others than to let God evaluate you.

2) Paul encouraged others to imitate him as he followed Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1). If the people closest to you imitated your current attitudes, priorities, conversations, and private decisions, what kind of example would they be following?

3) When you recognize sin in your life, is your first response to confess it and repent, or to explain why you acted that way, minimize its seriousness, or blame your circumstances? The next time you are confronted with your own wrongdoing, practice taking responsibility without making excuses.

