



"How God Provides Protection For His Church—Pt. 2"

In Acts 20:17-38, there are 4 essential practices of faithful ministry from the Apostle Paul that are necessary for all Christians:

I. A selfless practice that points others to turn only to Christ—vv.17-21

II. A sacrificial practice that strives to be faithful through hardship—vv.22-24

III. A safeguarding practice that provides for the care of others—vv.25-32

i. By giving that which is helpful—vv.25-27, 31-32

Paul was confident that God's word was perfectly sufficient to provide guidance, comfort and strength for these hard-working shepherds...[In fact]...There is not a single crisis occurring in the entire history of the Church of God, not a single difficulty in the entire path of any individual believer, from beginning to end, which has not been perfectly provided for in the Bible. We have all we want in that blessed volume, and hence we should be ever seeking to make ourselves more and more acquainted with what that volume contains, so as to be "thoroughly furnished" for whatever may arise, whether it be temptation of the devil, an allurements of the world, or a lust of the flesh; or, on the other hand, for equipment for that path of good works which God has prepared beforehand that we should walk in it. (1)

One day, in the court of heaven, all ministers of the gospel will give an account to Almighty God and He in turn will judge their faithfulness with the truth...[The minister must decide] who shall be feared—God or man? Who will be behind that bench on the great day—God or man? In this day of men-pleasers, may true ministers of the gospel be consumed with the reality of appearing before the judgment seat of Christ! May they remember that they are the watchmen on the wall (Eze. 3:17-21). They will either be clean of the blood of men or will be stained (Acts 20:26). How Christ's servants in gospel ministry ought to meditate on the appearing of the Chief Shepherd (1 Pet. 5:4) and of giving an account (Heb. 13:17), which will be according to a stricter standard of judgment (Jam. 3:1). What sort of men ought pastors to be in light of such sobering reality? (2)

Have you suffered from temptation, and been delivered out of it? It was *the word of God's grace* that built you up. Have you been in severe trial, and the Lord has blessed you in it, and brought you out of it? It was *the word of God's grace* that built you up. Have you been entangled in some error, and the Lord snatched you out of that error by applying some portion of his truth to your soul? It was *the word of God's grace* that built you up. Have you been entangled in the lusts of the flesh, cast down by some snare of the devil, and the Lord has delivered you out of it? It was *the word of his grace* that built you up. We are not built up by fleshly holiness, by creature piety, by long and loud prayers, by the doings and duties of the flesh; no, nor even by sound doctrines floating in our brain; but by *the word of God's grace* applied with a divine power to the heart. (3)

¹ Quoted in Alexander Strauch, *Biblical Eldership: An Urgent Call to Restore Biblical Church Leadership*, Rev. and expanded (Littleton, Colo: Lewis and Roth Publishers, 1995), 155-156.

² Brian S. Borgman, *My Heart for Thy Cause: Albert N. Martin's Theology of Preaching* (Mentor, 2001), 94.

³ http://www.biblebb.com/files/philpot/word_of_gods_grace.htm. Accessed January 17, 2019.