

KESSID



Sermon
"The Test"

Date
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Speaker
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Paul is continuing to travel through the region and preach to all who will listen...

(Vs) Acts 20:18-21 – "You yourselves know how I lived among you the whole time from the first day that I set foot in Asia, ¹⁹ serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials that happened to me through the plots of the Jews; ²⁰ how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house, ²¹ testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

- Of all his letters and his declarations recorded by Luke, none is more intimate or emotional than this final farewell.
- Paul began his address by remembering his own personal history with the people of Ephesus, especially his faithfulness regarding several tests.
- Today we can observe in his words five pitfalls he avoided and so for us to be aware of and even measured against:

1. He overcame the test of Laziness

(Vs) Acts 20:18 – "You yourselves know how I lived among you the whole time from the first day that I set foot in Asia..."

- He devoted himself to proclaiming the gospel and then nurturing those who believed.
- He didn't leave them to fend for themselves; he diligently taught them each day.

2. He overcame the test of Pride

(Vs) Acts 20:19a – "serving the Lord with all humility and with tears..."

- He wasn't bragging; he was remembering. He didn't say this to dote on himself but to inspire the elders.
- **Def:** The Greek word translated "humility" (*tapeinophrosunē*) carries the idea of lowliness of mind.
- It means he didn't talk down to the Ephesians like they were ignorant or stupid. He spoke peer to peer, simply sharing information they lacked.

3. He overcame the test of Discouragement

(Vs) Acts 20:19b – “and with trials that happened to me through the plots of the Jews;”

- Christians who avoid sexual immorality, greed, and pride still must struggle with unfair criticism.
- The Ephesians didn't respond to the gospel as quickly as other groups Paul had preached to; the spiritual darkness covering Asia took a long time to penetrate.
- If that weren't difficult enough, Paul endured personal rejection so acute his enemies wanted to see him dead. It's hard not to take that personally, but he didn't succumb to discouragement.

4. He overcame the test of Fear

(Vs) Acts 20:20a – “How I did not shrink from declaring to you...”

- **Def:** The Greek word rendered “shrink” (hypostellō) means “to hold oneself back” or “to draw away.”
- Children of God often struggle with intimidation.
- Effective ministers learn not to back down.

5. He overcame the test of Inefficiency

(Vs) Acts 20:20b, 21 – “...anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house, ²¹ testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.”

- **Def:** The Greek word translated “profitable” (sympherō) refers to anything that helps, creates an advantage, or confers a benefit.
- Paul measured his every decision and action by how it would help the Ephesians.
- He was willing to try anything that would help them learn and grow: teaching in groups, in homes, one on one, publicly, privately-he overlooked no promising method.
- That basic formula... *(Vs) Acts 20:21b – “...of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.”* ...is the bedrock message upon which everything else in Christian theology and practice builds.
- Paul always gave priority to sound doctrinal teaching.

He then shares what will happen next for him...

- *(Vs) Acts Ch 20:22-27* – Paul shares of his last great mission...he says goodbye
- And he shares what will happen next for them.
- *(Vs) Acts Ch 20:28-32* – The Brave men and Women of God...
- **Translation:** He basically says... Man Up / Woman Up! Have courage!