



A thought experiment

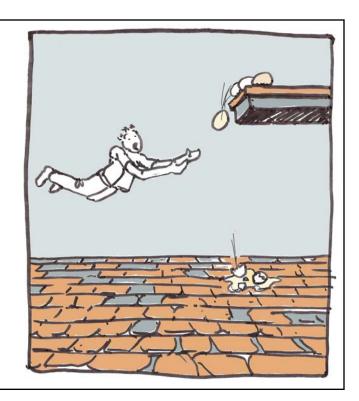
- Your home is about to be completely destroyed
 - What would you run in to rescue?
- You are forced to leave your home forever on foot
 - What would you carry?
- With no urgency, you are free to focus on what you want to focus on
 - What will your focus be?
 - What is truly most valuable?
 - How should that affect daily life?

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Above All Else Acts 20:17-38

Chinese page 1803 Spanish page 1417 English-Green page 760 English-Brown* page 1115

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English-Green page 760 English-Brown* page 1115

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Acts 20:17-38 17: Paul's last time to see friends & leaders in Ephesus 18-21: • He had spent about 3 years teaching and caring 22-24: for the people of Ephesus 25-27: • This was his last time to see the leaders 28-31: • What did he say? 32-35: 36-38: Chinese page 1803 page 1417

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Acts 20:17-38 17: Paul's last time to see friends & leaders in Ephesus 18-21: His authority: his life with them as a model life Serving **Christ** in humility, compassion & endurance 22-24: • 25-27: Teaching publicly and privately without hesitation • Jews and Greeks as one church 28-31: • One or the other or separately 32-35: would have ended the controversy 36-38: All must turn to God and have faith in Jesus Not family heritage Not religious activity Not merely ideas • Not superficial change

Acts 20:17-38

17: Paul's last time to see friends & leaders in Ephesus

18-21: His authority: his life with them as a model life

22-24: His example: God's purpose for him was above all else

25-27: • Trouble ahead in Jerusalem

28-31: • Jews (non-Christians and Christians) were offended by

32-35: Paul's message and example: uniting Jews & Gentiles

36-38: • His only aim: complete the work given by Jesus

 Make known the good news of God's grace to all peoples together

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Acts 20:17-38

- 17: Paul's last time to see friends & leaders in Ephesus
- 18-21: His authority: his life with them as a model life
- 22-24: His example: God's purpose for him was above all else
- 25-27: His lasting commitment: Proclaim God's Gospel
- 28-31: Consciously making his last statement
- 32-35: A watchman who doesn't warn people is responsible
- 36-38: for the losses of those people
 - Must tell "The whole will of God"
 - Jew and Gentile in one church together
 - By grace alone, not by any religious actions
 - Expressed in obedience to God

Acts 20:17-38

17: Paul's last time to see friends & leaders in Ephesus

18-21: His authority: his life with them as a model life

22-24: His example: God's purpose for him was above all else

25-27: His lasting commitment: Proclaim God's Gospel

28-31: His command: guard the church above all else

32-35: • "Holy Spirit made you overseers"

36-38: • It is "the church of God"

- It was bought by the blood of **His only Son, Jesus**
- Dangers from the outside and dangers from inside
- Guard it passionately, night and day

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Acts 20:17-38

- 17: Paul's last time to see friends & leaders in Ephesus
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- 22-24: His example: God's purpose for him was above all else
- 25-27: His lasting commitment: Proclaim God's Gospel
- 28-31: His command: guard the church above all else
- 32-35: For the challenges: trust in God and the Gospel
- 36-38: Gospel: build you up & give you true inheritance
 - Do not "use" the church to meet your needs
 - God blesses giving rather than taking
 - True for leaders
 - True for every person in the church

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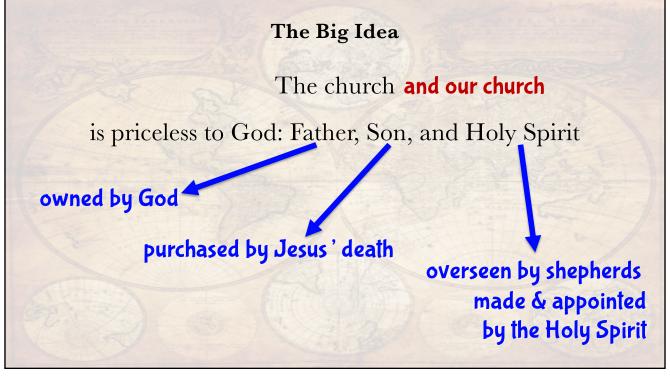
28-31: His command: guard the church above all else

32-35: For the challenges: trust in God and the Gospel

36-38: They closed in prayer and tears

Rich fellowship in grief and hope before God

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What would you dive to rescue?

Jesus died to purchase the church for God

As people whom Jesus died to save, what is priceless to Him must be priceless to us



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Application

- •Value the church as God values the church: priceless
 - Not the building, and not merely individuals,
 but the community & family of God's children

"For this is what the Lord Almighty says: 'After the Glorious One has sent me against the nations that have plundered you—for whoever touches you touches the apple of his eye—I will surely raise my hand against them so that their slaves will plunder them. Then you will know that the Lord Almighty has sent me."

Zechariah 2:8-9

apple of the eye = pupil. Something highly cherished and protected

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Paul said: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst."

Here is his worst sin: "I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man."

from 1 Timothy 1:12-15

More specifically: "Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples...Jesus said him 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?""

Acts 9:1-5

To attack or harm the church & its people is to attack Jesus

Application

- •Value the church as God values the church: priceless
 - Not the building, and not merely individuals but the community/family of God's children
 - The whole community
 - When 1 part suffers, we all suffer:
 - female or male
 - single, married, divorced, or widowed
 - unemployed, underemployed, employed, or student
 - citizen, resident, visitor, or otherwise
 - every ethnicity and race
 - every education level and class in society, and more...

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Application

- •Value the church as God values the church: priceless
 - Not the building, and not merely individuals but the community/family of God's children
 - The whole community
 - When 1 part suffers, we all suffer
 - Division breaks God's heart
 - "Separate but equal" is not the heart of God!
 - It isn't "mine" or even "ours". It is God's church
 - For example: We must see problems with tears

Application

- •Value the church as God values the church: priceless
- •See the high calling of our connection with the church
 - -Board members/elders
 - •Appointed & made by the Holy Spirit to oversee the church that was purchased by Jesus' death
 - -Ministry team leaders and "ministers" and caring for others
 - •Entrusted with the work of God among His people
 - -Every person
 - •A defender and promoter of God's people
 - •There are no godly solo Christians
 - •What is your "balance" with the church? >> God blesses giving

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The church is priceless to God:
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
The church should be priceless to
us as well
Love and pray for our church,
and for the Church

and for the Church and give and serve, for our leaders, for those who serve, for those who attend, and for those who stray

