

Insight into Spiritual Growth and Development

Memory Verse:

Ephesians 4, 11-12

11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ (Auth. King James)

Lesson Text:

Read Acts 20th Chapter

Background Reading:
Eph 4th Chapter, 1 Cor 12th Chapter

Paul was once known as chief of sinners, but in our lesson today we find him preaching and teaching the very same Gospel he once violently opposed. Paul immediately began his ministry forgetting those things which were behind. (Gal 1:15-24)

Who or what is hindering us? Paul revisited places where he had won converts, and established churches. He watched many of them grow from carnal (babes) to mature believers in the Lord. Many had now had become pillars in the church, and were now able to teach others. (Heb 5:11-14)

Some had become missionaries, teachers, pastors, evangelists, elders, and good lay members. Since Paul was now departing, never to see the Saints at Ephesus again, he gives the elders spiritual guidance and instruction so that the growth and development of the church would continue, and that God would give the increase. (1 Cor 3:16).

1. **Paul – The wise masterbuilder** Acts 20:1-21
 - 1.1. Paul had laid the foundation (Jesus) for elders and leaders to build upon 1 Cor 3:10-11
 - 1.2. He had fully preached and taught the people Rom 15:19
 - 1.3. He exercised the Gifts of the Spirit
 - 1.4. Paul maintains the communion service Acts 20:7-12
 - 1.5. Paul had endured many trials, and temptations Acts 26:26

2. **Believers are needed to carry on the ministry** Mt 9:38
 - 2.1. Paul was now departing - they were on their own
 - 2.2. Grow into maturity - do not remain babes Heb 5:11-14
 - a) Study the Word, attend Christian Education 2 Tim 2:15
 - b) Faithfully attend Church services Heb 10:25
 - c) Pray, fast, and do not sow seeds of discord

- 2.3. Count not your life dear unto yourself - deny self** **Lk 14:26-27**
- a) Let God mold and make you - bear your cross
 - b) Finish your course - don't abort God's plan for your life - in nothing be moved - be steadfast
 - c) Obey them that have rule over you in the Lord **Heb 13:17**
 - d) Do not be rebellious to admonitions given by elders
 - e) There will be no excuses in that day - Paul had taught them well

3. Final admonitions to elders **Acts 20:22-38**

- 3.1. Take heed how you build on the foundation** **1.Cor 3:12-15**
- a) Duplicate the ministry
 - b) Fully preach and teach the Word (Paul taught in houses as well as temples), feed the flock
 - c) Operate in the Gifts of the Spirit - Paul did
 - d) Be full of the Spirit

- 3.2. Be good watchmen upon the walls - Remember the work of Satan is to destroy the Church**
- a) God's prophets and ministers were like watchmen who could not hold or give Him rest day and night until prophecy was completely fulfilled in the full restoration of Jerusalem and Israel in their land **Isa 62:6**
 - b) Watchman – one who looks out and sees from a height, with the view to warn of impending danger or to give any information, good or bad. Ezekiel was especially distinguished with this title. The duties of a watchman were: To wait and watch for what God would command or give, in warning; to watch over and superintend the people; to warn people **Eze 3: 17-19**
 - c) Through strife, divisions, grievous wolves entering in, and from Saints within the Church **Jn 10:10**
 - d) Remember backsliders always try to recruit others (beguiling unstable souls) **Deut 13:1-5,13**
2.Pet 2:14

- 3.3. Be faithful - to your calling, and in giving** **Eph 4: 1-2**
- a) Feed the flocks of God **1 Pet 5:13**

- 3.4. Be not greedy of filthy lucre - God will provide** **Tit 1: 10-11**

- 3.5. Love the brethren - Note the true care, devotion and love of the brethren for Paul (he loved them too)** **Jn 3:14**

- a) They kiss him weeping and lamenting, but they must now carry on the work of the Church as they had been taught!

- 3.6. Paul commends them to God and prays for them (no man is able to pluck Saints out of God's hand)** **Jn 10:28,29**

Lesson Aims:

1. To show that ALL believers can be used by God as they grow and mature in the Lord, regardless of past sins.
2. To show that mature believers should be able to carry on the work of the Lord in the absence of Pastors, Elders, or other leaders.