

Pastor Aaron E. Lavender  
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## **“A Pastor’s Farewell to The Church”**

### **Acts 20:17-38**

#### Introduction:

Ledora & I want to thank you for the last 34 years we have been allowed to serve you here at Grace Baptist Church. It is exceedingly difficult to say good-bye to people with whom we have ministered and loved and been loved. The struggle that Ledora & I went through when we began to even think about leaving the people of this great church reminds me of this passage in Acts 20, where Paul said good-bye to the elders of Ephesus, among whom verse 31 says he had ministered for 3 years, and with whom he had built a strong bond.

In his farewell address, Paul emphasized three factors that I think are important reminders for any pastor to share with his people, especially as he passes on the leadership baton: **true salvation**, **true doctrine**, and **true assurance**.

#### I. True Salvation: Acts 20:17-21

Paul said that he did not hold back from declaring to them this central message “***repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.***” The expression “***kept back***” comes from Luke’s medical vocabulary. It is the Greek word, ***HUPOSTELLO***, the word used of withholding food from patients. Paul had never done that. He had never withheld spiritual food from those he ministered to. He had always spread a full table, setting before them the whole counsel of God.

## II. True Doctrine: Acts 20:28-30

### A. The instruction (v.17)

### B. The warning (vv.29-35)

1. There are dangers around us (v.29a, "*savage wolves will come in among you*")
2. There are dangers among us (v.30a, "*Also from among yourselves men will rise up*")
3. There are dangers within us (vv.31-35, "*Therefore watch and remember*")

⇒ Carelessness (v.31) –

⇒ Shallowness (v.32) –

⇒ Covetousness (v.33) –

⇒ Laziness (v.34) –

⇒ Selfishness (v.35) –

## III. True Assurance: Acts 20:32-36

Paul loved these saints. But God was calling him away to minister elsewhere. And so, he gathered them together and said, I am committing you to God. His hope that they were going to be okay in the end, was not in himself, or in them, but in GOD, to whom he was entrusting them. He said, "*I commend you to God*" (cf. 2 Tim. 1:12).