Men's Devotional, November 1, 2026

"You Yourselves Know"

Acts 20:17–38

"Therefore, I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God." (Acts 20:26–27)

Paul was in a hurry. He sailed past Ephesus to save days (v. 16), then stopped at Miletus and sent thirty miles for these men, and waited for them to walk it. He knew chains were coming (v. 23). He knew he would never see their faces again (v. 25). Nothing here is casual. Every word was bought with time he could not spare.

Before we read

If you knew this was the last hour you would ever have with the men you had poured three years into, what would you spend it on?

1. "You yourselves know" (vv. 18–21)

- Paul says "you yourselves know." Who in your life could you say that to, and would they agree?
- He lists tears and trials before he lists teaching. Why that order?
- What have you shrunk from declaring, and what was the reason? Not the excuse. The reason.

2. The course and the ministry (vv. 22–24)

- Paul knows something bad is coming and cannot see what. Is that harder or easier than knowing exactly?
- "I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself." Despair, or freedom? What is the difference?
- He measures his life by finishing a course he did not design. What would change if you measured yours the same way?

3. Innocent of blood (vv. 25–27)

- Is there such a thing as guilt for silence? (Compare Ezekiel 33:1–6.)
- Paul's innocence rests on his declaring, not on their receiving. What does that free you from? What does it obligate you to?
- Where is the line between wisdom about timing and shrinking back? How would you know which one you were doing?

4. Shepherd the flock (v. 28)

- Why does "be on guard for yourselves" come before "and for all the flock"?
- Peter at Antioch drew back from the Gentiles, and others followed him (Gal. 2:11–14). Where in an ordinary week does what we do teach the people watching us more than what we say?
- Paul grounds the command in what the church cost, not in the elders' authority. What changes if the motive is the price rather than the position?
- "The Holy Spirit has made you overseers." What does that mean for a man who wants the office, and for a man who does not?

5. The wolves are you (vv. 29–31)

- Paul gives one verse to the wolves from outside and one to the wolves from inside. Why does the second come with the warning "from among your own selves"?
- The motive Paul names is "to draw away the disciples after them." How would you tell, in real time, the difference between a man teaching what he believes and a man gathering a following?
- Paul says this to elders, about elders. What question does a man have to ask himself to make sure he is not the wolf, and when did you last ask it?

6. The commendation and the ship (vv. 32–38)

- Paul's exit strategy is the word of His grace, not a successor. Why is that enough? Would we have done it that way?
- "You yourselves know" opens the address (v. 18) and closes it (v. 34). What is he doing by bracketing everything between those two?

- They grieved most over the face they would not see again, not the doctrine, not the warning. What did three years of tears build between these men? What are we building?