

Acts 20:28

Taking Heed Under God's Grace

Saturday, May 20, 2023 ▫ Read Acts 20:28

Questions from the Scripture text: What is the main command in v28? Of whom are the elders to take heed first? Of whom else are they to take heed? How many of them? What is the relation of the elders/overseers to the flock? Who made them overseers among them?

What must a minister do to be clear of the deaths of those entrusted to him? Acts 20:28 looks forward to the morning sermon on the coming Lord's Day. In this verse of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **a minister must proclaim all that God has intended/counseled.**

Taking heed by the Word. Paul has given solemn testimony of his own innocence of the Ephesian elders' blood. Would they be innocent of their own blood? Would they make use of the whole counsel of God that he has proclaimed to them? Now the apostle charges them, "Therefore, take heed to yourselves."

And Paul has included with this solemn testimony of his own innocence of the Ephesian congregation's blood. Would these elders also be innocent of that congregation's blood? Would they continue to declare the whole counsel of God? Would they, also, keep back nothing helpful but proclaim and teach all of it in public and house to house? Now the apostle charges them, "Therefore, take heed to all the flock."

This is the great thing in feeding and tending souls: the word of God. Do you take heed to yourself in the Word of God? Do you take heed to those entrusted to you? Do you bring yourself, and any entrusted to you, under the public and household ministries that the Lord has ordained? Take heed!

Taking heed under the Triune God. Taking heed isn't optional. It's an assignment of the Holy Spirit. Yes, there is a process that we can learn from 1Tim 3 and Titus 1 for identifying and ordaining elders. But it is the same Spirit Who gave us those words that also superintends all providence, and He is the One Who has made certain members of the flock overseers.

To the responsibility of Who made them overseers, they must add the responsibility of what sort of flock this is, and whose flock it is. This flock is a church, a people who are called out of the world. And this flock belongs to God. It is the church of "the Lord and God" He has called them. It is to Himself that He has called them. And now they are His. What a wonderful thing the church is—the church of God!

Third, there is the responsibility of how these overseers, and the rest of the flock, came to be the church of the Lord and God: He purchased them with His own blood. God (God the Son, specifically) took to Himself an additional, new nature for the purpose of dying for sinners (cf. Phil 2:5–11, 1Cor 15:3, Heb 9:13–22). What a precious church this is that has been purchased with such blood!

Taking heed by grace. So, as the apostle charges these elders with their ministry, he brings to bear the weightiness of the triune God to their responsibility. But this is a great encouragement as well.

Would the Holy Spirit make them ministers and then not attend their ministry by His almighty power? Would God call them to shepherd His own church, but not make all things work together for good for that church of those called according to His purpose? And would the Son shed His blood to purchase them but not proceed to intercede for them always and to save them to the uttermost?

It is a great responsibility: "who is sufficient for these things?" But it is an even greater ability: "our sufficiency is of God!" This is our hope, when we use the means ordained by God as employed by the men ordained by God: that they will be effectual by the grace of God!

What use do you make of the means ordained by God? How are you availing yourself of the ministry that He has set over you? What is your hope in doing these things? Would you really be able to claim that as your hope if you weren't making use of what He says to?

Sample prayer: Lord, thank You for purchasing us by Your own blood to be Your own church, Your own flock. Having paid such a price, bless unto us Your priceless Word and the priceless ministry of that Word, by the same Spirit by whom You gave it, we ask in the Name of the Word, Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP23B "The Lord's My Shepherd" or TPH406 "Jesus, with Thy Church Abide"

For more Hopewell @Home devotionals, please visit hpwl.org/hah

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Acts 20 verse 28. These are God's words. Therefore, take heed to yourselves and to all the flock. Among which the holy spirit has made you overseers. To shepherd the church of god. Which you purchased with his own blood. So, for the reading of, God's inspired and the narrant work.

Also is just given the Ephesian elders, his solemn testimony that he is. Innocent of the blood of all of them. And the u and he says, they're all. When he says, innocent of the blood of all Applies, not just to them who have come out from ever since do my leaders.

Let's go to the congregation that is in Ephesus. For the lord, having given to paul. The ability to stay there. For some three years. Pull was able to preach through the proclaim. The whole council. Of god to them as we've heard him say. In verse 27. And this comes upon the heels of Other statements that he has made about keeping back, nothing, that is helpful.

About doing both the proclaiming and the teaching. Making sure there's a full. Verbal ministry. With preaching and teaching, and Not just, In public in the assembly. But also, according to houses, From house to house, and he having Um, then for each and taught the whole council of god. Both in public and from house to house.

He is innocent of the blood of all. And now, having made that solemn testimony about himself, He gives them a command to heed. Taking to yourselves to key to all the flock. First, take key to themselves. Because they are not able to give an excuse before God and what's none of us are able to give any excuse before

god About one, particularly That the lord has taken from them as the excuse that they haven't heard.

They have hurt. And so, they are to take heed to themselves. To believe all that they have learned from paul that the lord teaches to obey All that they have learned from paul that the lord commands and To keep ministering the words to themselves. For the apostle, has just announced to them that The word of god is the way by which God.

Take overseas and shepherds. Them. And so, the first command is to take you to themselves is a great error. If we first take heat to others. Walking with the lord and faith in faith in jesus christ walking with the lord in repentance. Is a little bit like, The instructions for if the cabin depressurizes on an airplane, You'd have to do your own mask first and then help someone else.

Last. Uh, you being Um, unsaved unhelped. Are unable to attend to others. So you you must take heed to yourself first. Before you even think about, Applying the word of god to others. Make sure that you are. Applying it to yourself. Paul is innocent of the effusion elders. Blood would they be innocent of their own blood?

But they're not only to take heed to themselves there to take heed to all the flock. They are not to leave anyone else out. They are to. Be able to say of the rest of the flock. What pole is able to say that they are innocent Of the blood of the rest of the flock.

They must declare the whole council of god. They must keep back nothing helpful when they return to emphasis, they must preach. We must preach in public, they must reach according to houses, they must teach. They must teach in public, they must teach according to households. They are to take heed.

To all the flock, knowing that there is the same question. Now puts to them, will they be innocent of the blood of all? And so they are to take heat by the word. It is by the word. That the flock is fed, it is by the word with the block block is provided for and strengthened guarded.

And brought back when they are straying. It is. By the word of god, the ministry of the word in all of the different. Ways that we have seen that the lord has appointed and ordained to use that ministry. That his flock is overseen. And shepherd it. And so they are to do the things that the lord has set them apart to do.

The Lord is set them apart as elders. And This is not necessarily. Or even primarily a question of age. We know what an older is first, admit the three and Titus 1. And when first peter five, Um, describes the church in terms of elders and younger. He's not just talking about age.

That he's talking about those who. The chief shepherd. Has put among them is overseers and shepherds. So all three of those things come. Um, come into consideration here. Because these men to whom he has been talking to to whom he has been talking or identified as the elders. From the church and ephesus.

But here, and in our verse they are said to be made overseers. And so, one of the Uh, one of the things that they are doing by their preaching and teaching in public, and from house to house, Is overseeing. It is the word. That governs. And, You know, they're also told not only that they had been made overseers but that their task is shepherding.

So again, Separating is done by the word and so they're to take heed. By this word, paul has given them a description, a summary description of his own ministry. And based on that summary description, he says, therefore you Take heeds to yourselves therefore you. Take heed to all the flock.

In other words, The description that he has made, as we have, Been making application of these last several weeks. The description that he has made of his own ministry as a template. And they are being commanded now. Receiving apostolic conjunction. Apostolic command. To follow the template. So, we are to Um, take heat of ourselves by the word and then anyone whom the lord has entrusted to your care.

Whether in the household, Or in his church takeed to yourselves. And to all the flock, But thankfully we take heed under the triune god. There is a wicked and fleshly way of thinking. Not just as we have, We've heard a couple of these wicked fleshly ways and thinking as we as the apostles have been responding to them in roman 6.

Oh if we're cinnamon's great superbounce let us sin. So the grace may increase. Or if we're not under the law. But we're under grace. Then let us sin. Those are wicked and fleshly responses. Another wicked and fleshly responses. If God already knows, why should i pray And a third.

Or fourth. Another wicked and fleshly response is. If god is going to finish the work that he has begun in me. Why do i need to take heat to myself? If god is going to finish the work that he has begun in, The congregation. Why do i need to take heed so much?

To all the flock. No, which of course is a wicked response and Uh, you can answer it with because god said so, Uh, but the logic verse 28. Is not that. Uh because god, the father has decided to take to himself a church. And about the sun. Has paid the redemption price by his blood and God the spirit.

Is now gathering and calling in the ranging and ordering all things that all whom the father has. Has chosen and the sun has purchased would be brought to him. Because the triune God has done these things. We don't need to do anything. Is the wicked and fleshly response. But the righteous response to in god's word and to this doctrine is because the triune god.

Has determined to take for himself those. Whom he has redeeming in this way. We must take heat. Because he has done. So we are under responsibility and because he has done. So We shall be enabled. And so those are the the next two points. Take heed under the triune god and take heed by grace.

Taking, he doesn't optional. The holy spirit is the one who has made them overseers now. Obviously the one who wrote, first Timothy 3. And Tightest one would have in an analogous way. Selected. And Set over the church of god. The particular overseers that god identified by those. God character qualities.

That we see in first Timothy 3, and Titus 1. But as this it is the same spirit who enabled the apostle. To select whichever elders and FSS. It is the same spirit. Who carry the apostle along with he wrote, first Timothy 3 in Titus 1 whose superintendents all providence.

He is the one who in his providence has made certain members of the flock overseers and that continues today. Those Uh, who are overseers in a true church. Have have been made, so and have come to be so Uh, by the work of the holy spirit. And so we have a responsibility to him.

Who has put us where we are. And not just the elders that have a responsibility. If the cold experience has given you particular particular overseers. Then you have a responsibility to the to the holy spirit. Two, as best disgrace will enable you. Receive. And avail yourself of that ministry.

That the scripture describes overseers elders, having In the church. And then we have not a responsibility, not only. Because of, who has made the overseers. Uh, Among the flock. But we also have responsibility. In accordance with whose flock it is. He says, among which And note that. The overseers are not separate

from the flock, they are members of the flock.

It says not sheep and sheep dogs, this is sheep and other sheep. Among which the holy spirit has made you overseers to shepherd. The church of god. So it's not just a flock, but it's also a household. But the flock and the households belong to a particular one. It's The flock is the flock of god, the church is the church of god.

Yes, they are a people called out and ecclesia. But they are not just called out of the world. They are called unto God, they belong. To him. In indeed, the original is. The church of the lord and god. He has called them, it is To himself. That he has called them and now they are his, his own.

Prize possession. So, it's not just Who put you into the position but it's Uh, who's they are? Whom you overseeing and Um, And whom you shepherd, if you're an elder. And if you are one of the flock who is not an overseer, you still, you must remember that you are gone.

You are you belong to God? You are god's flock. You are god's household. And therefore, You must submit yourself to give yourself to you. Being overseen and chaptered led directed taught. Governed held accountable, etc. In the way that god has has been pleased to do this things. Lest we?

Act as if we are our own lest, we raise our wisdom. Above his. Now, we are the we are the flock of god. We are The church of god and it's a glorious thing. Then that the church is Here is god's own household. Here is God's own city. Here is god's unbride.

Here is god's own flock. And how precious it is then. For his sake. And so, he He shows them his Um, their responsibility. Because of who made them overseers because of whose church they are. And then the third place, he says them their responsibility. By how? They came to belong to the lord.

Because they were purchased by the blood of the lord. They were purchased by the blood of god. This is an amazing thing. God has blood. His infinite eternal and unchangeable he is. Invisible. He does not have blood in any. Uh, in his divinity. And god cannot change. And so there's no transformation of the sound whatsoever.

In order. For god to have blood by which he might purchase his people. He has to add another nature. A separate nature. To himself. Unless, of course, the second person of the godhead does, So that now he has not only fully God. Living and draining with the father and the spirit from everlasting to everlasting.

But he is also, in addition to his divine nature, fully human, And why would he humiliate himself like this? Well, because Christ had to die for sinners. According to the scriptures. He had to offer a once for all sacrifice that is equal to the glory of god. Now, can they sacrifice a blood be equal to the glory of god?

The blood evolves and goats could not avail. Neither could the blood of a mere man. Avail. The man whose blood was spilled had to be. Also god, If he was going to be able to purchase us, If you came to, Uh, to purchase. Dozen eggs. And dozen eggs was.

Dollar 20 cents. And you had 98 cents. You're in michigan, so there's no tax on food, although i think there might be now doesn't matter. Three 22 cents, sort. Who came to purchase? The soul of one who had sinned against. The glory of god. And you had the blood of a perfectly righteous, man.

You would still be infinity short. Because the purchase price is not the price of the blood of a man. The purchase price is the price of the blood of god. And these are the ones who have been purchased by the blood of god. That elders are called to overseeing to shepherd how great has their responsibility.

And then with you yourself your own soul and if you come to be A mommy with precious covenant children. Him that's setting apart into his church. You are. An absence of evidence to the contrary. And this is future evidence. Not every time they said, You are to consider them.

Saints set up art to god. With the seed of faith in them. Not so not so much that. That you would. Bring them to the table without Some sort of credible profession but still. Treating them, for god's sake and because of what god has said about them, As believers as christians.

So that you don't just tell them that they have to obey. You, you tell them that they have to obey you in the lord. And you address them the way the bible addresses them. Not making yourself wiser than god and saying, oh, i refuse to address you as a saint or a question until Until you have shown.

Um, Made a credible profession of faith. The new testament does no such thing with. The babies of believers. But then, what to you? If you're a mommy, And you have the sin riddled creature. And you're pulling your hair out and you're tempted to use. The techniques of the world to manage their behavior.

Because managed behavior sounds really good about now. Had been purchased by the blood of god. And they are members of the flock and church of god. And it is the holy spirit who has made you their mother. You see the responsibility though? Of using god's means with them and not the world's means.

And then also for fathers. Husbands of their wives, and especially elders in the church and with you and your own soul. We are tempted to Try many other things. For ourselves when we were frustrated. Especially. But it comes and he says, take heed to yourself. Take heed to yourself as one who did not put yourself in charge of your own self.

Take kids to yourself as as one whom god has declared part of his flock part of his household. Take heed to yourself as one. Whom god has purchased with his own blood. Huge responsibility. Now to take head to yourself. Not just so you can feel better about You're checking the boxes off of whether i've attended on the private household and public means grace.

Belong to god and i have the option of not. Taking heed to myself.

But there's not just responsibility, there's grace. There's grace. That is the greatest encouragement. To participate in a work. That the triune god himself has begun is doing and well complete. Will the holy spirit. Make these elders overseers among the flock and ephesus and not. But attend his ministry. By their almighty power.

You're an overseer now. Keep act. Nothing helpful. Preach and teach publicly and from house to house. The whole council of god. Good luck. It's blasphemous to think of it that way, right? You say well, something there's luck. Well, it's even worse to say that the holy spirit is going to For some reason, abandoned the one who he put in that place and who his ministry depends entirely upon the powerful working of the spirit?

No, of course. The holy spirit is the one. Is going to attend their ministry by his power will god call them. To shepherd his own church. And then, not make all things work together for the good of those cold. According to his purpose. Well Jesus. Purchased by his blood.

And then not enter heaven with that same blood. Always living to intercede saving them to the uttermost. Was it possible that he would just do the purchase part and mount the rest? And so you see, when you think about How the triune work that is involved in the redeeming of souls laser responsibility upon us.

You say, who is sufficient for these things? But when you think about what the fact that what you're participating in is a triune work. And that god the father, son and spirit attend, you and help you and do all for you. As you work and for all for the souls and he is redeeming for himself.

Then you say our sufficiency is of god. It is a great responsibility but it isn't even greater ability. And this is our hope when we use, the means that are ordained by god. As employed by men who have been ordained by god. No longer. Do we become discouraged? About the faults and the minister or the faults and the flock to the faults in the household.

We looked to god who has ordered and put these things together this way. And we hope in him. The love in, which he determined at the, what wisdom in which he planned it. The power in which he's executing it the faithfulness in which he never for a moment stops.

But we'll surely bring it to completion. And we say all of this will be made effectual by the grace of god. And then we are much encouraged. And strengthen. To take kids to ourselves. And to anyone and everyone. Him the overhooser. Whose care the holy spirit as entrusted to us.

And then, let's pray.

Lord. We thank you for how much instruction and encouragement. There is in this little verse. We thank you that we might have. The opportunity. Just now to consider it. And especially first, and foremost, for each of us to take into ourselves. We pray that your spirit would be gladness in the truth.

What it is. You father, son and holy spirit to have taken us to yourself. When we pray that you would, But give us that same gladness and strength and hope with respect to anyone else. To me, minister. We pray that you would be glorified. By completing the work that you have begun.

And by helping us each to do the part that you have called and commanded us to do. And how you have been pleased to do that work. For, we ask it in jesus name. Amen.