

The Blood Bought Church

Dr. John Carmichael

[Act 20:28-31 NASB95] 28 "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. 29 "I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; 30 and from among your own selves' men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. 31 "Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears.

- Almost half of evangelicals (46 percent) do not go to church often. The most common reason evangelicals give for not attending services is that they haven't found a church or house of worship they like (33 percent).
- Other words: its optional based on my personal preference. Consumer mindset.
- Joe Carter says, "When we say church membership/attendance is optional, we are also tacitly rejecting the very people Christ 'bought with his own blood' (Acts 20:28). I need to find the courage to tell them that Christianity is not a choose-your-own path religion, and that the people we are to associate with have already been chosen for us."
<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/americans-christians-dont-go-church-must/>
- Paul thought differently in Acts 20:28
 - Guard the church. (It was a local church he was referring to in his admonition.)
 - It was a personal and corporate benefit to guard the church.
 - They were called by the Holy Spirit to guard the church.
 - They were to care for (shepherd) the church.
 - It is valuable! It was/is purchased by "His own blood."
- Paul talked about how he did it then. The church needs to be guarded now.

How do we guard the church?

Here are 4 ways we guard the church according to Acts 20.

I. God wants us to serve in the church.

- a. [Act 20:18-19,22-24 NASB95] 18 And when they had come to him, he said to them, "You yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, how I was with you the whole time, 19 serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials which came upon me through the plots of the Jews; ... 22 "And now, behold, bound by the Spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there, 23 except that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me. 24 "But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God.
- b. Be served or serve. Consumer vs contributor. Critical or helpful.
- c. Your service gives your opinion more weight.

II. God wants us to value the preaching in the church.

- a. [Act 20:20-21, 25-27 NASB95] 20 how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house, 21 solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. ... 25 "And now, behold, I know that all of you, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, will no longer see my face. 26 "Therefore, I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. 27 "For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God.
- b. We value preaching by

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- i. Being present.
- ii. Judging what is said. 2 Corinthians 14:29. Content matters.

III. God wants us to be aware of the threats inside and outside the church.

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- b. Inside threats – dividers, gossips and heretics.
- c. Outside threats – society and government.
- d. God expected us to participate in the guarding of the church.

IV. God wants us to depend upon Him for the church.

- a. [Act 20:32 NASB95] 32 "And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build [you] up and to give [you] the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.
- b. We have our part. He has His part. He will do His part.
- c. [Psa 27:1 NASB95] 1 [A Psalm] of David. The LORD is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The LORD is the defense of my life; Whom shall I dread?
- d. [Mat 16:18 NASB95] 18 "I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.
- e. Are we praying for the church? Standing in faith and warfare for the church.

V. God wants us to give to the church.

- a. [Act 20:33-35 NASB95] 33 "I have coveted no one's silver or gold or clothes. 34 "You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my [own] needs and to the men who were with me. 35 "In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"
- b. We give to church. We give from the church.
- c. 2 Corinthians 8-9 and Philippians 4 concerns material giving.
- d. [1Co 9:11 NASB95] 11 If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we reap material things from you?
- e. [Rom 15:27 NASB95] 27 Yes, they were pleased [to do so,] and they are indebted to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual things, they are indebted to minister to them also in material things.
- f. Refuse to be a spiritual freeloader. Yes, receive. Yes, give.

- **We guard the church by serving, valuing preaching/doctrine, being aware of threats, depending upon Him, and giving to the church.**