

## Approaching God

Read this portion of Psalm 41 and begin with an opening prayer

*Blessed are those who have regard for the weak; the LORD delivers them in times of trouble. The LORD protects and preserves them— they are counted among the blessed in the land— he does not give them over to the desire of their foes. The LORD sustains them on their sickbed and restores them from their bed of illness. I said, “Have mercy on me, LORD; heal me, for I have sinned against you.” (Ps 41:1-4)*

A sign that we have received radical spiritual generosity is that we can be radically generous with those in need. Ask God to give you a true picture of the blessings he has graced you with. Praise God this morning that he has a heart for the poor, and ask Him how you might bless others today.

## Acts 20:17-38

**Passage Introduction: Paul’s Emotional Farewell**

The time has come for Paul to say his farewell to the Ephesians. He plans to speak to the elders of the church. He does not, however, speak to them in Ephesus. Instead, he calls them to Miletus, some 50 miles (80 km) from Ephesus (v 17). Paul’s actions might be misinterpreted as lack of interest in the church and a coldness which leads him to summon the leaders of the church to himself. But a careful reading of the text shows Paul’s deep affection for the Ephesian church.

## Bible Reading, Study & Meditation

**Start with Engaging the Text: Take a few minutes to highlight, circle, or underline key words.**

Use the space in the margin to jot down notes, or themes/ideas that stand out as important.

**Acts 20:17-38 - 17** From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church. **18** When they arrived, he said to them: “You know how I lived the whole time I was with you, from the first day I came into the province of Asia. **19** I served the Lord with great humility and with tears and in the midst of severe testing by the plots of my Jewish opponents. **20** You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house. **21** I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus. **22** “And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. **23** I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. **24** However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God’s grace. **25** “Now I know that none of you among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom will ever see me

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again. **26** Therefore, I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of any of you. **27** For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God. **28** Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. **29** I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. **30** Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. **31** So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears. **32** “Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. **33** I have not coveted anyone’s silver or gold or clothing. **34** You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions. **35** In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’” **36** When Paul had finished speaking, he knelt down with all of them and prayed. **37** They all wept as they embraced him and kissed him. **38** What grieved them most was his statement that they would never see his face again. Then they accompanied him to the ship.

## Questions for Reflection & Meditation

- What are 2-3 things you learn or observe about God in this passage?
- What are 2-3 things you learn or observe about you, other people, humanity in general?
- Are there any commands to obey or examples to be followed in this passage?

## Key Takeaway:

What are 1 or 2 main takeaways from today’s reading & study? Briefly summarize your thoughts.

**Close in Prayer:** Pray that your motives and the motives of your Christian leaders for being active in ministry will be pure and never selfish. Pray for protection for the flock of your own fellowship, that no one will be drawn away by distortions. (Acts 20:30)