

Sermon Topic: The Swan Song

Sermon Text: Acts 20:13-38

### Introduction

- What is a Swan Song? → A last performance, the final act
- Pastors Come and Pastors Go. What do you feel about this in the Methodist Church?
  - Sad? Happy? Who cares?
- Paul must be feeling that way because he was going away. This was his last message to the people he was leaving behind (vv. 22; 25; 36 - 38).

### You Know How I Lived

- Paul reviewed the past (Vv. 18 – 21)
  - Told people that **they knew** how he lived among the people
  - How do you live among people God is telling you to lead and serve? Whether it is at work, church, family or other community.
- Paul served with great humility (v. 19) → sounds to ironic, to *boast* about humility.
- What is humility?
  - It does not mean walking around with our heads bowed. This is just an act. It is not denying any praise.
  - If not using gifts to serve others, then we are unfaithful servants (parable of the Talents), because gifts are to serve others.
  - It is not denying any positions or responsibilities. Jesus said that whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant (Matt 20:26)
  - Humility is how you serve, and relate to people. This was the basis of Paul's statement.
  - Humility is willing to be a servant and to use the gifts God has given you.
  - Not about thinking less of yourself, but thinking about yourself less.
- Paul is saying to follow is example, as he himself follows Christ (1 Cor:11, Phil 3:17)
- Only when Paul has done that, can he command us to be completely humble and gentle. (Eph 4:2)
- See also: Phil 2:3 – 8

### **A Testimony For the Present**

- Paul did not hesitate to preach the whole will of God. (v. 20)
  - God demands that we live holy lives, where our sins are also confronted.
  - Therefore, we should preach of hellfire, of urgency and repentance, and not only sermons of blessing and peace.
- Paul worked hard for the weak (v. 35)
  - Processes, governance, and compliance are good things in the church. Beware of doing things right and not doing the right thing. (Gal 2:9 - 10)
  - The Church is not for ourselves, but for reaching out to the weak and the poor out there.
  - Are we concerned about our comforts (carpark, aircon) or welcoming new people to the church, and reaching out?
  - *What are we working hard for?*
- Paul was not afraid of hardship (v. 23)
  - Are we willing to serve even though it seems hard to us, or are we humble servants, not mattering what our position in the world is when it comes to being God's servant.
  - What are our "hardships" (waking up early, standing in the sun to direct cars etc.) compared to what Paul went through?
  - Are we so middle class that we are blinded to the needs out there?
- What is Paul's underlying motivation? Was it Guilt? Don't serve out of guilt. Rather:
  - Paul will live and die for the gospel (v. 24)
  - Paul was obligated and eager for the Gospel (Rom 1:14 - 15)
  - Paul was not ashamed for the Gospel (Rom 1:16)

### **An Exhortation for the Future**

- What is Paul's Exhortation for us all?
  - Keep watch over ourselves and the flock (v. 28)
  - Be shepherds of the church of God (v. 28) for we are bought with a great price, the blood of Christ.
- See also: Psalm 78:72. Integrity + Skill

**Reflection & Discussion**

1. Learning from Paul's example, how have you lived?
2. How dear is the Gospel to you?
3. Jesus said "*If you love me, feed my lamb, feed my sheep!*" How then are you shepherding the sheep He has entrusted to you?