Acts 20 - DiCicco

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Preacher: John DiCicco

[0:00] I came to a scary realization this week.

! I realize it's been more than 10 years since I started college.! It makes me feel a bit simultaneously younger than I feel and older than I think I am.
At the same time, when I got to college, I was determined to be a better student in college than I was in high school because in high school, homework and I did not really get along.
Throughout my time at Moody, I would call to mind a story from my orientation week to help me sort of check my pulse. My orientation group's leader, she worked in donor relations, specifically in the estate management side of donor relations at Moody.
Moody is a tuition paid school and she told a story about a couple who decided shortly before the husband's death that they would set aside enough money for her to live comfortably for a couple years and give the rest of their life savings to Moody for students to train for ministry.
[1:20] So, when I found myself tired with the chore of reading or bored with the material that we were covering or forced to sit through hours of dry, boring church history lectures, which was before our good Dr. Papendorf started at Moody, so it's not who you think it is.

Whenever I found myself starting to slip in my vigilant watch over my studies, I would call to mind this couple, this woman who was perhaps still alive and had given her life savings for my education. This helped me to check my pulse, to give my best, to develop the right habits, because to honor the true cost of my education, even if it was free-ish to me, I needed to keep a vigilant watch over myself.
I think these narratives from Acts that Tad read for us teach us largely the same lesson. That caring for Christ's church requires a vigilant watch. And both Paul's example and his encouragement to the elders from Ephesus highlight this.
What Paul displays throughout this chapter are the actions and the attitudes of one who has been so supplied so richly, satisfied so completely that he can pour himself out at every turn for those around him. Paul presses into every relationship. He reaches out to others even at personal cost to himself. And he reminds others that the same gift that supplies him is free and available and already at work in those who have received it. Wouldn't you want a friend like Paul? Someone with that generosity of spirit? Do you want to be a friend like Paul? Someone who stops and takes the time to build others up?
[3:14] I think even if you wouldn't call yourself a Christian this morning, doesn't the thought of a friend or of a community that are defined by this sort of generosity of spirit sound like a good thing?

And what if we could tap into something that satisfies us so completely that we could pour ourselves out for others and never run dry? Wouldn't you want that?
I think this is the kind of gift that we see on offer in our passage this morning. And these are the kinds of people we can expect to be if we receive it. Before we turn to take a closer look, would you pray with me one more time as we come to God's word? Almighty God, true source of light and wisdom, by your grace would you shine your light into our hearts that we might love you. Would you shine onto the pages of your word that we might see your son and live as he lived? We do this for your glory, we ask. Amen. Okay, I want to just walk through our passage this morning, taking it scene by scene.
And my hope is that as we examine the example and the encouragement of the Apostle Paul, we'll see that Luke, the author of our book, has put together these scenes for us to illustrate this truth, that caring for Christ's church requires a vigilant watch.
If you look with me at the first half of our passage, in verses 1 through 16, caring for Christ's church requires a vigilant watch first over the vitality of its people.

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[5:01] We're going to take this section in two parts, the kind of boring travel stuff and then the exciting bit that everyone's looking forward to. We'll just start in verse 1. Caring for God's church requires a vigilant watch over the vitality of its people. Verse 1 picks up basically as the noise of the riot in Ephesus is still dying down. Almost no time has passed between the end of chapter 19 and the beginning of chapter 20. And given the state of things in Ephesus, Paul has decided that it's time to leave. And to be fair, this has been Paul's plan since before the riot. You can look back in chapter 19, verse 21. Paul resolved, Luke tells us, to pass through Macedonia and Achaia to go to Jerusalem.

So to move from Ephesus, which is down here in Turkey, and go up through Greece down to the bottom of Greece to Corinth. Paul had even sent some of his network ahead. A young man named Timothy and another named Erastus to go and be with the churches so that Paul could follow, sort of to pave the way.
And then the riot happens and Paul is forced out more than anything else. But before he goes, Paul makes sure to call the disciples to him and to encourage them. Luke then, in our passage in chapter 2, he wraps up months of Paul's life into the 18 words of verse 2. Paul goes from Ephesus through Macedonia down through Greece to Corinth. A journey that last time took Luke two and a half chapters to record for us. He records in a single verse. Paul goes all the way to Corinth.
And another thing Luke doesn't tell us, but that we know from the letters of Paul that he wrote during Ephesus and his time in Ephesus and on this trip, Dan mentioned it last week, that part of Paul's journey, maybe the main part of Paul's journey, is to gather a collection of money and of provisions for the saints in Jerusalem. Christians there who were experiencing difficulty. It's actually in Greece at the end of this trip in the city of Corinth that Paul writes to the church in Rome. Here's how he frames the request to that church. This is Paul in chapter 15. He writes to say that he hopes to see them soon, but at the present, I'm going to Jerusalem to bring aid to the saints.
The point is, Paul's not just running around the ancient world, dodging rocks and preaching the gospel. He's taking pains to establish strategic systems for the gospel. After Greece, Paul plans to go back to Antioch by boat in Syria, this church that sent him out, but he hears of a plot by people who are going to hurt him. So he decides to go back through Macedonia on foot, doing the same journey he just did, starting in Corinth and making his way all the way back. And with him go a handful of people, all of your favorite Bible characters. I'm sure some of you are named after these. Sopater, Aristarchus, Secundus, Gaius, do we have a Gaius? Timothy, we've got one of those, Tychicus, and Trophimus.
[8:14] On the one hand, scholars would point out that these are likely just delegates sent by the different churches to sort of keep an eye on the money that they're sending. There's safety in numbers, right? This is a dangerous journey, especially to make by foot. But there's also accountability in transparency with all of these people around the money moving with Paul.

But we know more about this, more about them than this. We know that some of them, in fact, every one of them that we know from elsewhere in the New Testament is what Paul calls a fellow worker. Aristarchus was in prison with Paul when he wrote Colossians. Timothy was sent to the church at Corinth to strengthen, to teach, to confront them. Tychicus carried the letters of Colossians and Ephesians to churches. This is not just a financial accountability group. In fact, Luke, like we said, he never mentions the collection at all. But what Luke does highlight in verses one through six is the encouragement that Paul brings to the churches all throughout Macedonia and Achaia, encouragement that comes in no small part through this network of fellow workers in the gospel. Paul knows that to care for these churches, he can't simply plant them and leave. I mean, just think about the church in Thessalonica. Paul showed up, he preached the gospel, people were saved, and then they stoned Paul and he had to flee the city. It would not be responsible for him to peace out and never send any sort of word back to them, never check in on them, never see how they are doing. He knows that to care for the church, you need to, like a plant, you water it, you weed the bed. It might be necessary to prune the plant. And so Paul had established these strategic systems for the gospel. And keeping relationships going with all of these churches required more than what Paul could do by himself. And so he develops this nurturing network of gospel workers. See, Paul knows that caring for Christ's church demands a vigilant watch over the vitality of its people. But it's not just that Paul is one of these people with a very strategic mind. He's not some ancient, you know, management guru writing for the Antioch Business Review or something like that.

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Paul establishes these strategic systems not to control or corral the churches, but because he cares for them. In writing to the church in Corinth, Paul confesses to them the pressure of his daily anxiety for all the churches. This is like chief on his list after all of the things that are pressuring him, including shipwrecks and stonings and all sorts of things. And he ends with, you know, the big one, all my daily anxiety for the church. This is why Paul revisits the churches, why he encourages them, why he sends letters with Timothy and Tychicus to strengthen or comfort them, all because Paul knows that caring for Christ's church requires a vigilant watch over the vitality of its people.
[11:23] There's a proverb in the native language of New Zealand that I can say here because none of you speak it. It goes like this, So what is the most important thing?

It's people. It's people. It's people. It's people. I mean, what has all of Paul's suffering been for? All of his preaching, all of his tireless teaching, Dan reminded us last week. What's the point of all his patience under persecution? Of course, on the one hand, there's the fact that everything Paul does, he does that God might be glorified. He does for the gospel. But the on-the-ground outcome of all of Paul's effort is that the message of God might be heard and embraced by people.
That all of those who belong to God might believe the message of what he has done in Christ for them. So Paul's systems, his strategies, his vigilant watch over the churches he loves, it all serves to build up the vitality of God's people.
I think this is something we see very clearly in the next story. Paul and his team travel by foot back through Macedonia, all the way down to Troas, and on the last day of his trip there, the disciples in Troas, the Christians, they gather together to break bread. This was their worship service, coming together as we will after the sermon to break this bread, to remember and proclaim the death of Christ.
And Paul knows, Luke tells us in verse 7, that this is his last night in town. He also knows that he's not going to go with Luke by boat, because for whatever reason, he decides to walk to the next town. It's Paul's last night in town. What does he do? What would you do?
[13:21] If you were heading out the next day, not for a flight, not for a road trip, but a 20-mile trek over rugged mountain terrain to the next town, because I would go to bed early. Paul pours himself out for the people in Troas. He takes every opportunity to build them up. He's been with them for a week, and yet on this last night, Paul takes every opportunity to build them up. I mean, he takes every opportunity, but Paul talks long into the night, so long that at some point around midnight, in a room that's brightly lit, but maybe filled with oily smoke from many lamps, Luke tells us, a young man named Eutychus falls asleep, which wouldn't be so bad. I've put plenty of people to sleep while preaching, which makes me a lot like the Apostle Paul.

But Eutychus, whose name means the lucky one, when he falls asleep, he tips through a window three stories to his death. I've had a couple of good sermons, plenty of bad ones, but I've never killed quite like Paul.
That's great. They go down to the boy, and Paul, bending over him, calls out, don't be afraid, his life is in him, which is not to say he's not actually dead. Remember, Luke is here.
Luke is a physician. There's no mistake. What Paul is saying is, this boy has been raised from the dead. They bring him back upstairs. They break bread again, and Paul, apparently not getting the hint, keeps talking until daybreak to build these people up.
I mean, we can be honest, this is a bit of a weird story. It kind of comes out of nowhere. It resolves very quickly, and Luke gives us basically zero hints as to why this is here.
[15:13] Most commentaries basically explain what happens with a few more words and then move on. They don't engage very much with the story. But one thing they agree on is that Luke is making a connection here between Paul and other miracles like this, including miracles that Jesus did.

Of course, identifying Paul with Jesus is important, as Dan pointed out last week, because it joins Paul's message with Christ. It connects the power at work in and through Paul with the power at work through Jesus. But again, Dan just mentioned this last week. Luke just did this in chapter 19. Why does he do it again? Why does Luke connect Paul to Jesus again? I think we can make a jump because Luke connects Paul to Jesus in a way that reminds us of a particular Jesus story, a time when Jesus raises a young girl from the dead. You might remember how this girl's father, Jairus, is leading Jesus to his house. It's urgent. His daughter is at death's door, and they're on the way, pushing through the crowd, and a woman presses through the crowd behind them and reaches out to touch Jesus' robe, and she's healed. And Jesus stops and talks with her. Even with the pressing

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business, the very life of this little girl hanging in the balance, Jesus stops to see this woman, who had largely been marginalized in life for the last 20 years.
Jesus stops to address her as daughter and to send her away in peace. And while he's speaking with her, we learn in that story that the little girl has died.
But Jesus, just like Paul, says, do not be afraid. He goes into the house, he goes into the room, and takes her by the hand, and says, child, rise. And in Luke's telling of this story, just as with Eutychus, he says, her spirit returned.
[17:15] Her spirit is in her, and she got up at once, and she ate. It's not only the impressive power at work in Jesus and through Paul that connects these stories.

I think it's also the impulse that we see toward people. The same orientation we see in the Lord Jesus to stop, to take the time to build up this woman in the crowd.
Remember, she's already been healed, and he knows that, but he stops. He calls her out and tells her to go in peace. The same impulse is what we see in Paul. Who stops?
Well, you can just read verses 13 to 16. Paul is heading back to Jerusalem as fast as he can. Who knows how much money he's got burning a hole in his camel.
There's the pressure of the suffering poor in Jerusalem weighing on his mind. There's the daily anxieties for all the churches that he mentions. And in Troas, on his last night, he spends an evening, not an hour, not two, but a whole night to build the church.
[18:18] He stops to build them up because caring for Christ's church requires a vigilant watch over the vitality of its people. What's the most important thing?

It's haitangata, the people. This is one thing I've loved about Holy Covenant Church. I see it every week.
The groups that gather around coffee and cookies, the laughter, the sharing like we're going to today of food, the rhythms that are part of our life, like meals and times together.
Time given to one another because as a community, we are called to keep a watch on one another, to encourage one another, to take the time to build one another up. That's something we have loved about becoming a part of Holy Covenant.
But still, let me encourage us to follow Paul's example, to keep a careful watch over those habits because they can easily become routine. No pro golfer gets to the tee box without evaluating what's at stake.
[19:26] It doesn't just get up and swing away. He has a job to do. So let me encourage us all, as we come to these very kind of ordinary weekly routine meetings, as we come to catechism or this service, as you go to home group this week or to a prayer meeting.

Teens, as you go to SNT tonight, remember what's really happening because we have a chance to build each other up. So remind yourself what's really going on, what's potentially at stake, and give it everything you have.
That doesn't mean we need to take ourselves too seriously, but we should take the time to build others up. In Paul's example, his vigilant watch over the vitality of the people of God sets the bar for us.
His example turns us outward. To be a part of Christ's church is to take the time to build others up, to reach out to others, even at personal cost to ourselves, to press into every relationship, to pour ourselves out for one another.
Because to care for Christ's church requires a vigilant watch over the vitality of its people. And this is a task that we've all been given. There's a danger, though, in drawing all of this just from Paul's example.
[20:42] In the first place, we might easily become disciples of Paul rather than disciples of Jesus. And more than this, we can run into the danger of trying to manufacture this vitality. If we just have enough programs and we get enough people involved, vitality happens, and we have a thriving, healthy church.

But as one pastor put it, there's a difference between manufacturing the Christian life and manifesting the life of Christ. We can run ourselves into the ground trying to manufacture vitality unless we ground ourselves in the gospel.
And to be honest, unless we ground ourselves into the gospel, it's inevitable that we will run ourselves into the ground trying to manufacture true, authentic vitality. And Paul knows this.

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Even Paul, who took every opportunity to build others up, to care for the vitality of the church, he never set that expectation on his own strength. It's not just enough to keep a vigilant watch over the vitality of people.
And we see this because Paul's farewell speech in the second half of our passage reminds us that unless we keep a watch also over the veracity of our confession, we have no hope of caring for Christ's church.
[21:56] Belief always works itself out in behavior. And so having seen Paul's example, let's turn now to examine the encouragement he gives to others. Encouragement that's meant to ground them in the only thing that can satisfy them, that can supply their need, that can sustain the vigilance required to care for Christ's church.

From Troas in the smoky lamp-lit room, Paul heads back to Jerusalem as fast as possible. He takes a ship that won't stop at Ephesus because he's eager to get back as fast as he can.
And as much of a hurry as he's in, Paul is not in that much of a hurry that he's gonna neglect the chance to give a final word to those who are tasked with taking care of Christ's church in Ephesus.
Paul is in a special position, I think, as an apostle, as the founder of this church in Ephesus. For the last three years, probably the primary teacher and spiritual leader on this congregation.
You remember we even started this morning in Ephesus, right, as the noise from the riots dying down. Now Paul, on his way back, he can't help but check in and remind these leaders one last time of the task that's given to them and the gospel of the grace of God that grounds their work.
[23:19] And Paul starts in verse 18 by reminding them of his time with them, his three years. He says, you yourselves know how I lived among you. He goes on to remind them of the trials and the trouble that he experienced, that they walked through with him, that despite this trouble, Paul never once shrank back from declaring anything that was profitable to them.

You just remember last week, Dan highlighted that part of what gives us assurance that the word will do its work, that God's word prevails, is that it prevails through tireless teaching. Paul touches on that here.
He taught in public in the hall of Tyrannus and in the synagogue. He was in the hall of Tyrannus for two years teaching in public and also from house to house in private. Paul taught Greeks.
He taught Jews. He testified both of the repentance toward God and faith in Christ that leads to eternal life. Paul's point to them is, you've seen how much I poured out for this role.
Paul's pattern of putting in front of the church everything that is profitable comes back to the purpose of building up Christ's church because the vitality of the church is never disconnected from the veracity of its confession.
[24:34] A church's behavior always rests on the foundation of its belief, either for good or for ill.
And this is exactly why Paul labored through the trials and the plots, the imprisonment that surrounded him for years in Ephesus because the very life of the church was at stake.

If the people of Christ's church are to live the Christian life with any vitality, they need to be grounded in the gospel. Not just once, but over and over.
And so Paul stayed for three years and taught tirelessly. And so Paul reminds the elders, this is what you've seen in me.
And now your task is to ground the church in the gospel of God, to make sure that the people of God stay near to the spring of living water. Paul knows that all his work to ensure the vitality of God's people means nothing if they lose sight of that source of life, if they wander away from the spring.
That's why Paul poured himself out for three years. I mean, who does that? I can think of at least four examples.
[25:52] Holy Covenant, I don't think I've ever seen a model of more tireless, sacrificial, earnest, and deeply honest shepherding than I've seen in the four elders that I have the privilege of serving alongside.

To see the hours and the attention that it takes to sustain each week and month and year of our fellowship together. I mean, from day one, I have, to be honest, struggled to sit in the same room with Daniel and Dave and Dan and Tad just because of the caliber of care that they devote to this church.
So I'll put them up there with Paul. They have kept a vigilant watch over the people and the confession of this church. They've poured themselves out for the very same reason as Paul, to

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keep the truth of the gospel at the center of church life.
And it shows because it's not just them. Our family has been blown away by the example you all have shown to us of generosity, of hospitality, of commitment to God and to His people.
Again, to be honest, I feel like we are still playing catch up with the bar that you set each and every week. The vitality of the people of Holy Covenant and the community that you form is incredible.
[27:22] And so I want to commend you for that. I want to commend my fellow elders for your shepherding. I want to commend you all as members and attenders of Holy Covenant Church for keeping the gospel at the center of your life.

And yet there's danger for me if I set my sights simply on copying your behavior or trying to keep up with the other elders without tapping into the source of it all. Paul set a crazy example for these elders.
But who can actually keep up with him? This is the Apostle Paul. The perseverance, the hours, the overcoming, it's a huge ask. Who can actually do this? Just look at the next section from verses 22 to 27.
Look how utterly free Paul is. Paul is headed toward Jerusalem. He's constrained by the Spirit, literally bound by the Spirit, chained to the will of God, knowing nothing that's coming down the pipe for him except that real chains and real affliction wait for him in every city.
Did you catch that in verse 23? Bound by the Spirit, headed toward real chains, Paul pushes on in verse 24, but I don't account my life of any value, nor as precious to myself, if only I might finish the course to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.
[28:37] Who is like that? I mean, what kind of people would we be if we didn't count our life of any value? If my plans and my time and my money were not precious to me, what kind of people would we be if we were like Paul?

But surely we can't be expected to do just whatever Paul does. He's got a different disposition. There's something, you know, wrong or different in his head. Who can actually do this?
Well, Paul in verse 28 turns to the elders and says, now it's your turn. You know how I've lived, how tirelessly I've worked.
I'm going. And so now you are going to need to keep this up. Who can do this? Paul's answer is, in essence, anyone.
In fact, it's everyone who holds to the same gospel Paul does. because he's not asking the elders to match his disposition, just his doctrine. What makes Paul pour himself out isn't the kind of guy he is, it's the gospel he believes.
[29:50] I'll put it this way, what Paul knows about Christ, his confession, shapes everything about his ministry. It's what we read earlier from Philippians. Amy read for us, let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God, something to be grasped, but emptied himself by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.
He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Paul presses into every relationship because Jesus was all about people.
Jesus, in humility, looked to the interests of others. Paul pours himself out at every turn because Jesus poured himself out. The one who created all things wrapped himself in his creation.
The source of life set himself on a course headed for death. Paul reaches out to others even at personal cost to himself because Jesus, who being God himself, paid the highest price of his own blood for the sake of the world.
[31:06] Jesus has done what we could never do by securing an inheritance of eternal life for all who turn toward God and repentance and trust by faith in the Lord Jesus, as Paul put it.

In Jesus himself is an unshakable, immeasurable, and undying source of life. And Jesus has done what we could never do and at the same time given us everything we need to do what he did.
To press into every relationship, to pour ourselves out at every turn, to reach out to others even at personal cost to ourselves. And this is why Paul turns to the elders and says, now it's your turn.
Your turn to shepherd the flock of God. Your turn to follow my example even as I follow Jesus. It's your turn to care for the flock of God at great personal cost to yourselves because this church was obtained, look at the end of verse 28, with the very blood of the Son of God.

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If it's this precious blood that is the source of life for all the church, then of course Paul's command is for the elders to keep a watch over the confession of the church. The vitality of the church's people is tied directly to the veracity of its confession.
[32:26] And since the blood of Christ has bought this people, caring for the church of God requires a vigilant watch. The very life of God's people is what is at stake, not their physical lives, far more important, the eternal life that's on offer in the gospel.

This is why Paul said that he's innocent of the blood of all who are in Ephesus because he didn't shrink back from declaring the whole counsel of God. Paul pastored the church in Ephesus like a shepherd in the desert.
In the desert, fences are impractical. In New Zealand, full of lush, rolling hills, everything is covered in grass, there are sheep fences everywhere. But in the desert, you don't shepherd with fences, you shepherd with wells.
The sheep follow the shepherd because wherever the shepherd goes, there is life. Moses is the one with the staff, so Israel would be foolish, more foolish than they are to walk away from him when they need water because God has given Moses this staff that brings forth water.
Paul pastored by providing the only well that will never run dry, the living water of the Son of God, the whole counsel of God, his plan for salvation. And Paul warns the elders of the church in Ephesus to make sure that they lead God's people to the well.
[33:48] also to watch out because where there are sheep, wolves will come. Look at verse 29. I know after my departure, Paul says, fierce wolves will come in.

Some will creep up even from inside the church. Notice that the wolves attack the sheep, maybe not in the way we think, with teeth and claws, persecution and affliction, but I mean, we know from Paul's example anyway, that's par for the course.
The wolves endanger the sheep by speaking twisted things, by confusing the confession of the church. The wolves endanger the flock by leading sheep astray in search of other wells.
Maybe for us who have spent our lives in church, we should make sure to hear the warning that some of the wolves will come from within the church itself. And they won't necessarily look like wolves or act like wolves or sound at first like danger.
The most dangerous kind of wolf is one who thinks he's a sheep and begins to wander off towards another well and who brings others with him out into the desert to die.
[34:58] And so Paul picks up his charge again to the elders in verse 31. Therefore, be alert. Remember that for three years because of this danger, I didn't cease night or day to admonish everyone with tears.

Paul's reminding them that the stakes are high. It's the very life of the people in this room that is at stake when we meet each week. So Holy Covenant, ground yourself in the gospel.
It's another reason I love that we say the creeds each week, that we read the Bible each week, that we have a group of people who love the word of God. For these elders in Ephesus to care for the church of Christ, they have to stay close to the source of the church's vitality.
And so Paul commends them to God and to the word of his grace. Literally, Paul hands them over to God. Every time I read that sentence, I have to check myself because I always read it, I commend to you the word of God as if the word of God is a good thing for you to pay attention to. But what Paul actually says is, I commend you to God and his word of grace. I've done all I can, but I'm handing you over to God. I've put all this pressure on you and then Paul says, but only God, only his word of grace is able to build you up and give you the inheritance of his people.
[36:20] In this God and in his grace alone, Paul places his trust. And to this alone, he points the elders because there's no vitality for Christ's church if the shepherds neglect the source of life.

I was determined to do better in college than I did in high school. I did okay.
The gift of my tuition helped me to check my pulse every once in a while. It kept me vigilant in my studies. I am far more terrified at the task of shepherding God's people.
the stakes are much higher. Your eternal life and mine are in the balance and the cost is far greater. It's not four years of tuition. It's the blood of Christ himself. And yet this task comes with the source of its own strength. It provides the strength needed.
[37:20] In Christ, we are given everything. So if the thought of a community marked by Paul's generosity of spirit speaks to you, if the thought of a people who press into every relationship, who pour themselves out in every direction, who reach out to others even at personal cost speaks to

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you, then remember that this is just who the gospel makes us.

Not because we have any natural disposition, but because of what we've been given. This community is the church of Christ. It's his people. His people because he has bought us with his own blood.
His people because in him we have life, a source of living water that satisfies us so richly, that supplies us so completely, that we can live like him, pouring ourselves out for others.
We're his people because we have learned from him that it is more blessed to give than to receive. It's a pattern worth protecting. So church, ground yourself in the gospel.
And from its spring of life, take every opportunity to build others up. Because we are Christ's, and bought with his blood. Let's pray. Our Father, would you give us all that we need in Christ to follow you, to care for your church.
[38:44] We ask in the name of your son. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

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