

The farewell tour

Acts 20

When I was a boy in my father's house,
still tender, and an only child of my mother,
he taught me and said,

“Lay hold of my words with all your heart;
keep my commands and you will live.

Get wisdom, get understanding;
do not forget my words or swerve from them.

Do not forsake wisdom, and she will protect you;
love her, and she will watch over you.”

(NIV Proverbs 4:3–6)

The farewell tour

“I have been carefull to tell you everything you need to know about God”

(A loose paraphrase of Acts 20:27)

Paul is on route to Jerusalem (vv16,22,23)

Anticlockwise round the Aegean Sea into Greece

A plan to sail to Syria abandoned

Clockwise round the Aegean to Miletus near Ephesus

With a large team, the primary purpose is consolidation: the wolves are preparing to attack (v29).

Paul's method

How are the wolves to be fought off? Many words! (v9)

Paul is absolutely certain that the best method to protect God's people is understanding: an understanding of God's will and purposes which is as complete as human language can make it (vv20, 27).

I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus. (v21)

But this is no trite formula!

Many words

Salutation (aspazomai, v1)

Encouragement (parakaleo) with many words (v2)

Not a systematic theology or abstract philosophy

Practical, warm, encouraging, nourishing

Delivered with passion (vv19,31)

Many words

Paul

Stretches out words (parateino, logos, v7)

Talks for a long while (or long enough)
(homileo, hikanos, v11)

Keeps back nothing profitable
(hupostello, oudete, sumphero, v20)

No simplistic formulae, but a rounded understanding

This takes time and energy

Many words

Paul

Teaches (didasko) in public and private (v20)

This comprises

Testimony (diamarturomai, v21,24)

Preaching (kerusso, v25)

Declaration or *Proclamation* (anaggelo, v27)

Many words

Paul

Warns (noutheteo, v31)

Commends (paratithemi, v32)

A personal response is required

Many words

In summary, Paul *speaks* (epo, ereo, v38)

Paul is just following Jesus:

Therefore everyone who hears these *words* of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. (NIV Matthew 7:24)

Also Matthew 10:14, Matthew 13:23, Matthew 24:35, John 12:48, John 15:3, John 17:6, John 17:17 etc, etc!

Many words

What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching [lit. words], with faith and love in Christ Jesus. (NIV 2 Tim 1:13)

Keep reminding them [the elect] of these things. Warn them before God against quarrelling about words; it is of no value, and only ruins those who listen. Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. (NIV 2 Tim 2:14–15)

For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. (NIV 2 Tim 4:3)

Good advice for us all!