



BLANK CHECK (ACTS 20:22–28)

JUNE 30, 2024

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This series has brought us to discussions on church growth. We see from Acts that the church grows when the church actively brings nourishment, comfort, and healing to a broken world. We see from this passage that the church grows when it is faithful to proclaim an unpopular message that solicits persecution. By some mystery, preaching an unpopular message grows the church. This is precisely because God gives the growth. We must be willing to have boldness to proclaim an unpopular message if we want our church to grow.

2.0 ACTS 20:22–28 – PAUL’S CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE EPHESIAN ELDERS

2.1 CONSTRAINED BY THE SPIRIT: THE OBLIGATION OF OBEDIENCE

Paul tells his audience that he is “constrained” by the Holy Spirit to go to Jerusalem. This means that it is Paul’s moral responsibility to leave the church at Ephesus to go to Jerusalem.

We must remember that we have been bought with a price. Jesus did whatever it took to rescue us. He was a “blank check” to do whatever God asked — “not my will, but your will be done” (Lk. 22:42). So we too must be a blank check to do whatever Jesus asks, compelled by love, to proclaim an unpopular message.

2.2 IMPRISONMENT AND AFFLICTIONS AWAIT ME: AN UNPOPULAR MESSAGE

We cannot try to grow the church by watering down the gospel. In fact, a neutered gospel will kill the church, not grow it. Preaching what people want to hear by conforming to popular culture is fatal to the church. God blesses the church with growth when we stick to the proclamation of the entire counsel of the Scriptures.

Stephen was killed. All of the disciples were either martyred or exiled. We follow a man who the world crucified for the truth of this message. See Matt. 7:13–14, 1 Corinthians 12:23–25, 1 Corinthians 2:15–16.

2.3 THE MORAL RESPONSIBILITY OF PROCLAIMING THE ENTIRE GOSPEL

The church’s proclamation of the WHOLE gospel is our moral responsibility. Paul says, “Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all, for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.” This means that if Paul DID shrink away from his duties to proclaim the full, hard gospel, then he would be guilty of sending people to hell. We preach a full message because of our love and compassion. We want to see people saved. To say the hard thing is to exhibit compassion and love.

3.0 CONCLUSION

1. Are you a blank check for Jesus? Are you willing to do whatever it takes to obey? Are you willing to be uncomfortable? We are bought with a price and obedience is not an option.
2. As a part of your hard obedience, are you willing to share the full gospel of Jesus with others?
3. Are you willing to allow Jesus into the hard places in your life? Are you willing to HEAR and LISTEN to the hard message of the gospel?