

Introduction

- Touched on this morning:
 - Paul leaving a church that can do the business itself

What does such a church look like?

- A church that calls people of all backgrounds to "turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus"
 - a church that is "innocent of the blood of all men"
 - that doesn't hesitate to proclaim the whole will of God
 - *for us: community engagement, relationships, but not satisfied with that - pressing on to sharing the gospel message!*
- A church that keeps watch over itself
 - doesn't drift, but is fresh in its relationship with God
 - doesn't drift, but is faithful to the true biblical message
 - doesn't drift, but remains loyal to Christian ways of living, of treating one another
 - *for us: do we actually pastorally intervene, unofficially as much as officially? Do we hide behind "good preaching" as the way in which such a "watch" is kept, and abrogate our responsibility to watch over one another?*
- A church that is securely in God's hands (Paul is handing over the church from his own responsibility to God's, v.32)
 - and God's word...
 - "When I'm gone, who will look after you?" - God and his Word
 - for he will build us up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified - what does this mean?!
 - obscure phrase! But probably referring to our share in the blessings of God's kingly rule (both now and not yet) - which is of much greater value than physical, earthly riches (hence v.33ff)
 - Paul is saying: "I didn't look for earthly riches; I provide for myself by hard work. Don't you look for an earthly inheritance, but one that comes from God's rule - through his care, and through faithfulness to his word
 - *for us: are we committed to God's care, or do we try and manage along ourselves? What kind of inheritance are we looking for?*
- A church rooted in prayer - in other words in God
 - *for us: are we really?*