

Take Care!

[Acts 20: 28-38](#), [John 17: 11-19](#)

“Take care.”

It’s a way of saying goodbye which we often use to one another. But what do we mean when we say it?

Look after yourself? Keep well and happy? Stay safe – especially in this time of coronavirus?

But who will look after you and ensure that you do stay safe?



As Paul prepares to leave the church in Ephesus for the last time, he tells the elders to take care of themselves, to “keep watch over yourselves and all the flock”. It’s a very upsetting way to leave them, for he warns them that “savage wolves” are on their way and will damage their gathering, divide their people.

The picture is one of overwhelming danger, not only for the church in Ephesus, but also for Paul, who explains that he will never see them again, as he is “compelled by the Spirit” to head off to Jerusalem, and whatever trials lie ahead.

Yet the Ephesian church elders’ key to taking care of themselves and others does not lie in their own strength. Paul says, “I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.”

Paul’s words here sound very similar to those in John’s Gospel, where Jesus prays for his disciples: “Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.” (John 17: 17) Where is this grace and truth to be found?

Jesus is the Word – the word of God made flesh, full of grace and truth. He is the one who enables us to take care of ourselves and others. Trusting in Jesus builds us up both as individuals and a wider community.

Taking care doesn’t mean wrapping ourselves in cotton wool, passively insulated from the trials and pain of life. Trusting in Jesus doesn’t mean that bad things won’t happen; Jesus had no intention of taking his disciples out of the world, (v.15: “My prayer is not that you take them out of the world”) and Paul did not tell the leaders at Ephesus that they wouldn’t face great hardship.

Take care – to pray and stay connected with God through reading the Bible to soak up the words of scripture.

Take care – to trust God, so that even when times are tough, we can keep going.

Take care – to encourage others so that they will keep praying and stay connected.

*Take my life, and let it be
consecrated, Lord, to thee;
take my moments and my days,
let them flow in ceaseless praise.*

*Take my love; my Lord, I pour
at thy feet its treasure-store:
take myself and I will be
ever, only, all for thee.*

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