

Future-Proofing the Church

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[0 : 00] Welcome, and thank you for joining this message by David Entry at Carish Church. In this season of Great Awakening, may God pour out His Spirit through His Word, refreshing! your heart and awakening you to His will.

Acts chapter 20, and we'll be reading from the verse 17. And from Miletus, He sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church.

And when they were come to Him, He said unto them, Ye know from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons.

Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears and temptations, which befell me by that lying in wait of the Jews.

And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you and have taught you publicly, and from house to house. Testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.

[1 : 15] And now, behold, I go bound in the Spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me, save that the Holy Ghost witnesses in every city, saying that bones and afflictions abide me.

But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy in the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

And now behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.

For I have not shone to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Take it therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost has made you oversee, to feed the church of God which he has purchased with his own blood.

Here ends the reading of God's word. Amen. Shall we pray? Father, thank you for helping us to come together as a body of believers and to also tune in from everywhere around the world.

[2 : 35] As we hear your word, give us a listening ear to hear from you. As we hear your word, let what is predetermined when the word is taught happen.

Salvation, deliverance, hope, confidence, faith, enlightenment. Let your power come to bear and glorify the name of Jesus.

And let the church be built to your glory in Jesus name. Amen. Hallelujah. Praise God. So, you can see, you can see that from the text we just read, we keep going back to it because it's essential.

Now, the Bible talks about how Paul, when he was at Miletus, sent for the elders. And when the elders came, he was on his way to Jerusalem.

And then from Jerusalem, he would be going to Rome where he would die. So, he knew that they wouldn't see his face again. So, as it were, he was giving them a farewell message.

[3 : 45] But the farewell message was to his Asia, the church in Asia Minor at that time. How was he doing that? Through the leaders of the church of Ephesus, who also passed it on to the church of Ephesus.

And then, it was spread throughout the territory. It was spread throughout the territories where Paul has impacted. Because according to Acts chapter 19, we saw how all Asia had the word because of what was going on in Ephesus.

Because Ephesus was a hub. So, he called them to give them his farewell address or farewell message. Sometimes you don't realize how important certain people are until you have to say goodbye.

So, he called them to share his farewell message. And today, I want to just focus on really what I've been teaching on. But let me caption it, future approving the church.

Because he was about to leave. But if the church could only do well when Paul was alive, then he hadn't done a good job. The church doesn't need the presence of a personality to survive.

[4 : 51] A human physical personality. Because no human being is eternal. No human being lives forever. But the church lives forever. The church is eternal.

And so, the job of the human being was to inoculate the church, equip the church, prepare the church today for tomorrow's challenges.

So, preparing the church today. Because certainly, challenges will come tomorrow. Changes are coming and challenges are coming.

That will test the quality of the church. So, Paul's agenda was to prepare today's church for the challenges tomorrow.

Another way of putting it is the Christian legacy. He was more interested not about his dying. He was more interested about his legacy. The Christian legacy.

[5 : 50] So, you can't threaten such a man with importance of life. Who values importance of legacy above the importance of living?

So, his living was targeted towards his legacy. Or, his living got its meaning from his living.

Because he was about to live. So, it influenced the way he lived. I know most of us are not aware you are about to live to.

But not now. Because we are not ready. You have to wait until the next 30 years or more. You didn't say amen. Amen. But even if you wait for 100 years, you still live.

You still live. Everybody came to live. If you came, you will live. The reason why you came on earth is to come and say bye.

[6 : 50] Come and say bye. But, how you say bye will determine what you are going to meet, where you are going. So, when Paul came, he made sure.

When he called them, he said, guys, you are the leaders of the church. He told them, as I mentioned last week, he made clear to them his mission. Then, after telling them his mission, you know how I have lived my life and everything amongst you.

It is not in secret. You know how my life has been. Then he went on to his vision. He said, I am going. I am told that I have been informed that bonds and tribulations await me.

That is fine. Let me tell you my vision. He said, my vision is that none of these things move me. Neither do I count my life dear to myself. Why? So that I might finish not your race.

Not your race. Sometimes, when you look at the way people are doing their Christian life, you might think they are doing it for you. There is no point in running on a race, your race, looking at somebody's track.

[8 : 00] You have to focus on your track and run your race. As soon as you get born again, you are set on a track. They say run. And then, according to Hebrews chapter 12, verse 1, clouds of witnesses, they are watching.

Because they are on the other side, waiting for you. The cloud of witnesses are human agents who have finished and passed the baton to us. And not just them, the principalities, the angels of God, who are also cheering us on.

The arena is always packed. Amen. Amen. Amen. So, he said that, I'm running my race. The only way you can run your race is by grace.

Amen. You run your race through grace. So, he says that, that's why he mentioned the message of grace. He said, none of these things move in line.

In line down do I come alive, that I might finish my race with joy. Can you imagine when it's your time to depart? There's one thing I'm praying for every one of us, and I pray for myself.

[9 : 06] That, I would like to die like Paul. What do I mean? I know when I'm going. Not surprised, and then suddenly you're gone.

It takes everybody by surprise. No. You would want to be prepared. You work with God so much.

Paul said, I know you will see me again. Because I know I'm going. In fact, 2 Timothy chapter 4, he called Timothy, and he told Timothy, verse 6, my life is being poured out as a drink offering.

Yeah. And the time, he said, the time of my departure has come. Market is finished. I've started folding everything. You know, sometimes you go to the shop, they sell clothes.

So he was about to turn and put clothes there. And there's also set stall in town center to sell mangoes and things like that. They don't have a shop. They are selling potatoes and tomatoes and onions and all that.

Yeah. So when it's now time to close, they just fold everything. Paul, that's the kind of language. It's like soldiers who have gone to war. And they've declared the war is finished. We've won. And now every soldier must come home.

[10:10] They start packing. So that is the analogy and the imagery. Paul started packing everything. He said, the time of my departure is at hand.

And that's how I believe that God should help us all to live. And he didn't live in sorrow. He left. He got ready to live in joy.

He said, that I might finish my race with joy. So when he told Timothy, the time for my departure has come in 2 Timothy 4, verse 6.

Verse 7, he said, look at verse 7. You can tie it to what he was saying in Acts chapter 20. I fought a good fight. Did you see that? I finished. Why is he joyful?

He said, therefore, there's laid out for me a crown of glory. He knows he's finished. Would you be able to say, I've finished? Or when they tell you it's time for you to go, you say, oh no, I want to do a little more.

[11:10] Oh, oh, oh, oh. I should have done it more. I should have shouted a little more. I should have said it a little better. Oh, oh. Some people, when it's time for them to go, they will live with regret.

Because suddenly, the most important, what is most important in life becomes real to them. They realize that. So this thing is not about the money. It's not about the acquisition.

All these things are acquired. I'm leaving them behind. And you have to, that's why you have to do your will. What do you think will means? You are determining who will have what you. But are you not taking it? No, you can't take it anyway.

You came to meet it. And you will leave it for someone who will also leave it. That's why many times houses are, some of us are living in houses where people, people were living in it a long time ago. And they are gone. And some left with regret. And now it's your turn. Determine that you won't live with regret. Don't, don't just be a Christian who comes to church like an event to receive treatment.

[12:15] Receive treatment. It's okay. But if you don't take it, you will lose sight of more important things. And you will think about like, you have come to a show.

So, Paul said that my vision is that I want to finish my race with joy. It's not only the race. He said, and the ministry which I've received from the Lord Jesus to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. He said that I also have to finish it. That ministry I've received. I must do it. That's what he's trying to say. He's trying to say that my life is not as important.

My living is not as important to me as my fulfillment of the fulfillment of my mission. My mission. My mission.

A church to keep I have. A God to glorify. A never dying soul to save. And fit it for the skies. Paul said, this charge is given to me.

[13:23] He said, woe is me if I preach not the gospel. Because necessity is laid on me. And the 17th said, if I preach, I'll preach without a charge. Because it's necessity. That's the purpose of my living.

Now, when you listen to Paul very carefully, that is how every Christian is supposed to be thinking. Paul speaks about him being spent.

Spending and be spent. Life is meant to be spent for eternal purposes. What you are spending your life on must have eternal purposes.

I will gladly spend and be spent for your soul. That's a sound Christian. That's a strong Christian. A strong Christian is not someone who doesn't fall into temptation.

That is just basic. A strong Christian is someone whose life is being spent for the building of the church. He said, I will spend and be spent. And the analogy is almost like, we are like chalks.

[14:28] I read this somewhere and it was such a blessing to me. It's like a chalk. That has to be scrapped against a hard surface. And as you are being scratched against the hard surface, you are finishing.

And yet you are leaving a beautiful picture behind. Like a candle. As you shine. You are living. You are creating a glorious environment.

And yet you are finishing. As you shine. As you shine. As you shine. You are finishing. That is the essence of true and pure Christian ministry. It's not about status.

It's not about how powerful you look. It's not about glorious how glorious you look. It's about how you are being spent for the cause of your master, Lord Jesus Christ.

That's the kind of mindset Paul had. Like the chalk. Like the candle. Like the toilet paper. So in the book of 1 Corinthians chapter. This text is a good one.

[15:35] I need you to see it. In 1 Corinthians chapter 4 verse 3. Chapter 4 verse 13. The NIV version puts it in a very beautiful way. It says that when we are slandered, we all, we answer kindly.

Up to this moment, we have become the scam of the earth. Wow. The refuse of the world. The rubbish of the world.

The scam. We are just being used like toilet paper. I don't mind as long as the cause of my master, Jesus Christ, is being advanced. Hallelujah.

That is Christian ministry. So just in case those of us who know you will be in Christian ministry, start thinking like that. And forget about the stage. Forget about how you look on the stage.

One of the things that shows that you will not do well as a ministry is when you are so concerned about what people think about you. And how people see you. When you are so concerned about yourself, you can't forget about yourself.

[16:36] So it's important. Now, let's look at. So Paul talks about his vision to be spent for the cause of Christ.

Then he goes on to talk about his commission. His commission. Thank you, Jesus. Is someone learning something? So, let's look at verse 25.

It says that, indeed, now I know that you all amongst whom I have gone preaching, preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more.

He knew he was dying. He knew he was dying. But he wasn't betrapped. He said, I know you will see my face. He was telling the church leaders, brothers and sisters, his agenda was to build a future-proof church.

Because the church is about to face changes and challenges. People are going to come into the church and societies are going to change. Governments are going to change. And things are going to change. And first of all, our mission is not to start screaming out, no, that's not my right.

[17:45] It's okay to do that. But that's not a fundamental. What did Paul do to secure the future of the church? To future-proof the church. He called for the leaders and put them through, reminded them about mission, about vision, about commission.

He said, I know you will see my face. Now look at the next verse. Verse 26. He says that, therefore, I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. Not only you.

All men. When you leave Christian legacy, you are not only leaving it for the people you are dealing with. You are leaving it on the surface of the earth.

The impact of Christianity always transcends singular life, transcends communities, transcends generations. Every genuine Christian impact goes beyond the generation.

Goes beyond the generation. Goes beyond the community. Goes beyond a single life. If it's genuine Christian impact. Because it carries eternal strength.

[18:51] So he says that, you will see my face again. I am innocent of all man's blood. Why is he saying that? What does that mean? He said, for I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel.

Preaching shouldn't be only one way. Everything God will do is God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. I told them that I am coming to speak to you about the great things God is about to do in your life.

I am about to blow. It's like you are blowing air into a balloon and it's not expanding. That means there is a puncture somewhere. Stop the blowing and go and fix the puncture. So the pastor's job is not only to blow, but also fix the punctures.

So that your marriage and blow into your wedding, but a divorce is waiting for the next two weeks. Two years. Two years. Two years. Okay.

Two weeks is too close. Two. Two years. No. We don't want divorces in our midst. So we have to prepare people to divorce proof their marriage before it starts.

[20:06] It's important. It's important. A pastor must not only teach nice things. A good mother doesn't only give you dessert. So give you the verge.

The real master of the church. The real master mind. The brain behind the church. Is the Holy Ghost. He says, the Holy Spirit who does the appointment for the appointment to work. So he says, the Holy Spirit has made you over. Remember, he was talking to elders from verse 17. He called for the elders of the church of Ephesus.

And then he, elders of the church. Okay. Anytime you see the word elder in New Delhi. It's always plural. Always plural. It's because always there's a team. God works with a team of people. Now, call for the elders of the church. And he said, take it to yourselves. And to the flock over which the Holy Spirit has made you. I mentioned it two weeks ago.

[26 : 37] That word. The Greek word is episkopos. Episkopos. That's what is translated in English as bishop. So he was talking to presbyteros, elders. And he says, the Holy Spirit has made you being elder.

Has made you an episkopos or a bishop, a supervisor. That means you are supposed to govern and rule, oversee.

You oversee the church. Govern the church. That is why in 1 Timothy chapter 5 verse 17, he said, let the elders. Who is he talking about?

Elders. Let the elders be counted worthy of double honor. Especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. Let the elders who rule well.

Now, there is a well there. But the fundamental role is an elder should bishop. Or bishop rise. Okay. [27 : 37] So that's the ruling. So elders, when it comes to their role, is to rule.

Do you understand? And the act of ruling is what makes you a bishop. So it's like you are a governor over the church. But primarily what you do, your role is to govern.

But who you are is an elder. Now, an elder is not pointing to someone who is advanced in age. In the New Testament, when they use it, they use it in that sense. But in this sense, it's not someone who is advanced in age.

But who is charged with the responsibility of overseeing a church. So an elder is supposed to do the, when it comes to the role, he's a supervisor.

Okay. Am I communicating? So he's an elder, the person. The role is a supervisor. He's a bishop. So it's the same person. And then he said, over which the Holy Spirit has made you, back to Acts, has made you overseers.

[28 : 42] To shepherd. That's the function. That's pastor. To pastor the church. So an elder is supposed to be working as a bishop and to function as a pastor.

A pastor, the role of a pastor, as I told you, is, I think let me just, before I go to that. You know, in 1 Peter chapter 1, I'm sorry, chapter 5, verse 1, 2, particularly 2, 3, 4.

He says that, let's start from verse 1, it can make sense. The elders who are amongst you, I exalt, who, who, I, who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ.

So Peter was an apostle, but he said, I, I am, so long as the local church is concerned, I'm a fellow elder. A witness of the sufferings of Christ and also partake of the, the glory that's shared to me.

Then look at what he told them, there's two, elders. Who was he talking to? Elders. Then he told them, shepherd, pastor the flock. The church doesn't belong to anybody.

[29 : 49] Whose church is it? No, it's there. Pastor whose flock? God's flock. God's flock. So then when a pastor is dealing with congregation and church members, he should first of all remember, they are not your people.

Sometimes a pastor might pass a comment like, oh, you blessed my people today. I can't get what he's trying to say, but it's, it's, it's, it's not biblical. Not, the person doesn't mean it that way that he died today.

But, you know, sometimes language, words, can make us air easily. Because the words you are using is creating a mindset, is creating a philosophy, is creating an understanding, or is creating a worldview.

And so it's good to, to stay safe by getting educated and know some words that are not healthy to use. However, if you see someone using it, hear someone using it, you don't rule them out.

But, you know it by, and you know that they may not mean it in that extreme sense. That's not how they mean it. But, it's safer to stay with certain terminologies.

[30 : 58] So it says that, the church rule, verse 2, again, 1 Peter 5, verse 2. It says that, shepherd the flock of God, which are amongst you, serving as a bishop.

Did you see that? It's in the scriptures, in plain words. So there's no difference between a pastor and a bishop, biblically. Ecclesiastically, ecclesiologically, in some places, church government, different churches have their own internal systems.

Biblically, the biblical words of a pastor, an elder, and a bishop is referring to one and the same person. Does that make sense? So, now let's go back, because I don't want to focus on this too much.

So, in Acts chapter 20, verse 28, it said, Take heed to yourself, and to the flock among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God.

Did you see he has appeared here again? Whose church? The church. You know it's not Pastor David's church. Oh. Whose church is Caris? The church. Any church.

[32 : 08] The God of the Old Testament is the same God in the New Testament. The God of Christianity is really different from the God of Islam, the one Islam models as their God.

I'll explain it. The God of Islam is modeled after the God of the Old Testament. It's getting interesting. There is a slight difference.

The God of the Old Testament does not and can never have blood. Let's already have blood. Let's go. Therefore, take heed to yourself, and to all the flock among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood.

The God of the Old Testament does not have blood. That's what distinguishes Christianity from all other religions, including Judaism.

Because in Christianity, the bedrock of Christianity is Emmanuel. God is with us. God became one of us.

[33 : 19] God took on humanity. God. First Timothy chapter 3 verse 16. It says that God was manifested in the flesh. That's serious. Says.

Ladies, does it serious matter? Maybe you have thought you have trivialized. But it's a serious matter. God manifested in the flesh. How?

How? How? God made. And the word, which was God, became flesh.

What? That is the bedrock of Christianity. If this is eroded, Christianity will be eroded. The bedrock of Christianity is not our gathering, is not our niceness.

Because others also have been gathering, and some are even praying in public. Praying in public, central places. We are, we are, we are, we are, we are, we are, we are, we are.

[34 : 19] Calling. So if we do that, they can also do that. But what distinguishes Christianity is the fact that the God of Christianity became man. Has got blood.

Blood. Blood. And yet there was one man. That's the Easter message I'm talking about. I'm going to talk about the blood of God. The blood of God. One man.

God himself. Reduced himself. The one who the universe cannot be filled with. He's bigger than, yet he was able to condense himself to become a fetus.

In a woman's womb. For nine months, he was born. He walked where we walked. He sat where we sat. He ate where we ate. And he died on the cross. Just so he can use his blood.

To buy. He was purchasing. He came for shopping. God was sitting in heaven. He said, I'm. Daniel said, God, where are you going? He said, I'm going.

[35 : 22] To the shop. I'm going to do shopping. What are you going to buy? You have everything. He said, no, there's one thing I don't have. I have to buy it. I have to buy it.

I said, what is it called? Ephesians 3 verse 10. The Bible said, to the intent. That, that, that. To the intent. To the intent. The intention was that.

The manifold or complicated or many-sided, intricate, like an intricately cut diamond. Many-sided wisdom of God might be made known. How?

By the church. God wanted to procure, to purchase a church. To show his wisdom. To display. So he went to the market to buy an art piece. To buy an art piece.

A special sculpture. Buy something that people can look and say, wow. Wow. Wow. He said, to that, that the wisdom of God will be made by the church.

[36 : 22] Made known by the church to the principalities and powers in heavenly places. So when God was going, he said, where are you going? He said, I'm going to buy something. What are you going to buy? Why? You will see it. Because hidden in himself.

Then he comes on earth. Watch this. Watch this. Then he became, he took on flesh. Not that he was a phantom. Leave it in.

Something that was in real. No. He was proper Jewish flesh. Flesh like you and I. Hebrews chapter 4 verse 15. He says that he was like you and I.

The only difference between you and I and him was that he didn't sin. He was without sin. That's the only difference between Jesus and us. In his humanity. The humanity.

So God took on humanity. God mingled. He mixed himself with humanity. So much so that you don't have two entities.

[37 : 18] So not two persons. Jesus was one person. And yet he had two natures. He had two natures. The human nature. Fully human nature. Truly human nature.

And truly divine nature. And yet all are in one person. So he said if you have seen me you have seen God. He said before Abraham.

I am. He said I am the resurrection. And the life. I am the truth. The good shepherd. I am the door of the sheep.

He said I am the way. The truth. And the life. No one comes to the father. Except I am the bread. Of life. Hallelujah. He. God came on earth.

[38 : 15] To do shopping. Or. To come and buy. I didn't say. He said he bought. What do you. He only wanted to buy one thing.

Some of you. You know when you go to the shop. You buy everything. You. So you see. If you serve the church. You know what the implication is. To God. And your relationship with God.

It has a very interesting impact. On your relationship with God. When you are church focused. Because that's the only thing. He finds. Attracted to.

On earth. And he bought. How did he buy it? He paid. Money. No. He didn't use dollars. He doesn't need dollars. He doesn't need dollars. He doesn't need pounds. He doesn't need gold.

He doesn't need silver. Because the church is more expensive than dollars. Are you not more expensive than dollars? So. He came. On earth.

[39 : 13] To purchase the church. But Bible says it clearly. Unambiguously. In the text. With. His. Not your blood. Not the blood of a goat.

Not the blood of an animal. Well. He said. Me. My own blood. This is where the. The. The. The. Conundrum is. The controversy. Great is the. The mystery.

The mystery is. That God. Has his own blood. So when he was. So Jesus. As he was on the cross. He's actually God. So. I'll tell you why. He said. My God.

My God. Why have I. Why have you forsaken me? If he was God. Who. Who. Because. From this text. We can see. That actually. The one on the cross. Was God. The God.

Of the New Testament. Has blood. Because blood. Is the only thing. That. Can be used to purchase. A church.

[40 : 11] Paul said. You see. How it was. He was giving them a charge. But that charge. Was loaded. With deep. Theological. Insights. Deep.

Biblical. Revelation. That. Take it to yourself. And to the. Flock. Over which. The. And. He. I think he drops in there. Is what we call.

The Trinity. The Holy Ghost. Has made you a verse here. Okay. And it says that. It's the church of God. Which he purchased. With his own blood. But we know that the blood.

Of Jesus' blood. Right there. You see the Trinity. So. Take it to yourself. And to the church of God. So. He gives them this charge.

Take it. He said. Why? Because the future. I see. Is grim. He said that because. After my departure. For I know.

[41 : 04] It's not I'm guessing. I know. I know. I know. After my departure. Because Satan. And bad people. Have an interest in church. After my departure.

After my departure. Is salvage wolves. Who will come in. Amongst you. Not sparing. The flock. He said. They will not spare the flock. The only way. You can protect the flock.

From wolves. Is to make sure. The teaching is sound. Is the teaching. The sound teaching. That preserves the church. Is like salt. It's the. The only inoculation.

For the future of the church. Is sound teaching. That's why I said. Take it to yourself. And. To the flock. Over which. The Holy Spirit. Has made you.

Over. Overseers. The seven tasks. Of a Christian leader. Number one. Teach. Number two. Protect. Protect or defend. Number three. Shepherd the flock.

