

Serving As a Sender/Yokefellow

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Date: 18 December 2014

[0 : 0 0] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. It is our prayer that you will be blessed by the preaching of God's Word. So, I will just preach. Take your Bibles if you would and go to 1 Corinthians chapter 16.

Okay, you want me to? Don't push me, I will. You can save it on the internet. Make fun of me on YouTube. It would be almost as much fun as watching John Pearson ride a pony.

Hey. Alright, 1 Corinthians chapter 16. I am excited to be with you tonight. We're going to break from numbers because it's goer-sender night.

I want to talk to you a little bit about being a sender. And I'll talk to you a little bit about what we do as holding the rope. I really do believe that Trent has done a great job helping our church be more involved in that.

I probably lean too heavily sometimes on being a goer and too excited about that. And sometimes I may leave you out. And so, actually, he saw what I was going to preach tonight.

[1 : 0 1] And he texted back and he said, it's like a regular Thursday night, goer-sender. And he said it in a nice way. He said, all of our services are like goer-sender services.

And I said, maybe I should change my message. So, I want to talk to you about being a sender. And I want to try to help you do that better if I can. Help you help missionaries.

And so, I'm going to tell you from my experience spending 20 years in Peru and some of the things that God did with people that worked in my life. I would like to remind you of some little truths as we get started.

You know, first off, missionaries are having the time of their lives. They're good missionaries. They're having a blast. I can honestly say to you that the best years of my life were the years I spent in, well, I loved Mexico.

I loved learning the language. I loved language school. As bad as everybody talks about language school, I couldn't believe a Tennessee hillbilly could be allowed in a room where people are trying to teach you Spanish.

[1 : 5 9] And I can remember just saying something. And when they acted like they understood it, I was like, I can't believe that. They just understood me in another language. And it was just great.

And, in fact, Eric Elrod has been sending me videos from, he's memorizing Bible verses. He sends them to me. I don't know if he's really saying them at all.

But, I mean, he's making a lot of noise. And, actually, then he tells me it's a Bible verse. And then the other day he sent me one. And his teacher was saying something. And he would say something in English.

He would say, how are you? And then Eric would say it, and so they went through a whole panel. I'll just know I had the time of my life. I wouldn't trade anything for being a missionary. God uses you in great ways more than you could ever imagine.

However, you are not home for the holidays. This was probably one of the hardest times in my family. Not so much for me, don't tell anybody. But I wasn't that close to my family, and so coming home wasn't that big a deal.

[3 : 01] But my wife, her family, Christmas is like the biggest day of the year. And the fact is, I can remember in our house, when we had Christmas, it was like you might get a gift or two.

It might be a pair of blue jeans or, you know, whatever. And I remember going to Betty's house for Christmas, and they had the Christmas tree. They sent over, and there were gifts probably three or four foot deep all the way over to here.

I was like, I ain't never seen nothing like it. I love Christmas. I understood why she loved it. Amen? When you move out of the four-room house in the country, go to the big city, Christmas can be nice. Amen? But she really missed it.

And so I would like to say to you, these are good things for you to think about right now. Christmas seems very different in a different climate. I could never get used to Christmas in Atiquipa.

In Atiquipa, Christmas was warm. It's coming into our summertime down there. It was coming into summertime in their temperature. It was warm. It was warm. You know, when it gets really cold, it's not as cold as it is outside.

[4 : 03] And so in our city, so it was a great thing. I loved being there, but Christmas was hard. I'd like to congratulate you, by the way, on all you do. I hear all kinds of gossip.

I heard about Thanksgiving family times with some of you taking missionaries home. I heard about your kindnesses. I am blessed and proud to watch what you've done. But I would like to just remind you of some things before I read some verses and then share some little things with you.

Once you realize how important what the missionaries are doing, what they're doing is how important it is. They're carrying out his commands for all of us.

When you saw Jason standing there, Nikolas was a liquor or alcohol delivery man. His home was on the verge of being over.

He had alcohol problems. He had personal problems. The man was a wreck. He is one of the sweetest guys you would ever meet. I was down there one time, and he loved my Bible.

[5 : 06] He looked at my Spanish Bible and said, man, it's the fanciest Spanish Bible I've ever seen. I said, well, you get 50 people in church, and I'll give it to you. And so about two weeks later, he sent a word. He wanted his Bible. And Jason confirmed it.

I told Betty, and Betty said, you can't give him that Bible. You need to give it to one of your kids. That's the one you use the most time. So I bought him another Bible and put some money in it and said, hey, I'm sorry. My wife won't let me give it to you. I lied.

I'm henpecked. Amen? Amen? And then Vladimir was standing there. Vladimir is the one who spent the 90s in prison. His son is now going into the ministry.

Both of them men of God. God's doing a great work. And then the other guy's name is Christian, and he was driving a bus, which is a good job. It made good money doing that and wanted so desperately to be in the ministry.

And none of that would have happened if the gospel hadn't gotten there. And I could take you to Adikipa. And I could show you what you wouldn't believe. I told the missionaries the other day, there is no way to describe what it feels like to learn another language, cross cultural barriers, and see hundreds, thousands, literally, of people get saved.

[6 : 20] And in all honesty, one of the hardest things for me to adapt to being back here was almost every time I preached in Peru, people got saved. Almost every time. We got ready to give an invitation. It was not like, is anybody going to respond?

Sometimes nobody would respond, and all of us would be like, what happened? Austin must be back to that again. And because it was just unusual. So they are being used of God.

And what they do is so vital. They are doing our ministry, what God called us to do. And I thought of today, because I was at the airport picking up our family down there, and the USO was always there.

And, buddy, if a military man comes through, they are thanked. Everybody's going, thank you for your service. Thank you for your service. They clap for them when they come up the stairs. You know, the stairs look like you're going to heaven if you're going up.

It looks like you're going to purgatory if you're going down. And when they come up their platform, they welcome them in a special way. They give money to them. They provide entertainment. They send care packages.

[7 : 20] They consider themselves to be partners to the troops. I don't know of any other place like that except what we're doing here. The missionaries are our troops. They are our troops.

They are playing a vital role. We're in a support role. We provide them with weapons, air support, prayer, friendship, and it's a great thing. I want to show you in the Bible that it's not just us.

So look at 1 Corinthians 16 and verse 15. I will be honest. I'm not going to preach really too much. I'm going to share with you. But look at 1 Corinthians 16 and verse 15 where the Bible says, Paul's ending in the letter.

And he's going to talk to all these people. It's been such a blessing to him. And he says, I beseech you. I beg you, brothers. You know the house of Stephanas. You know the guys that live over Stephanas and his family.

They are the first people that got saved in Achaia. And they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints. If you've got your Bible open, I want you to underline. They addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints.

[8 : 17] There was a family in the church that said, we got saved first. And man, we're going to help everybody get saved. We're going to be a blessing to everybody that we possibly can.

And they were addicted. They committed themselves to helping people grow in grace. To loving people and helping people grow in grace.

Look at verse 16. Paul even said, I want you to submit to them. I want you to recognize them as leaders and everyone that helps with us. So there were people in that verse. You don't know that. He said, these people are helping me.

Now he's not in Corinth. He's writing a letter to them. And he's mentioning people in the church. He said, they're helping us. And he says, they're laboring. You ought to underline that. And so some of us in this room, you are really helping.

You may say, I'm not helping. I live in Alpharet. I live in Cumming. I live in Roswell. I live in this area. I'm not helping overseas. Paul thought they were. And he said, they're helping us. And they're laboring.

[9 : 14] In verse 17, he said, I'm glad of the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaas. For that which was lacking on your part, they have supplied. So there were things going on in the missionaries' lives.

There was probably money missing. There were some materials maybe they needed. Whatever it was, that church sent three guys over there and took it. And I love verse 18. They refreshed my spirit.

They refreshed my spirit. They made a difference in my life. They encouraged me. And so they refreshed my spirit and yours because it was a blessing on both sides.

So acknowledge them and what you do. So I'd like to talk to you. I'm going to give you seven little things. And I've already said them to you before. You probably already know them as well as I do. But I'm going to remind you of them.

And I want to challenge you. Not everybody, all of our missionaries don't even have Yolk Fellows. All of our missionaries don't have Yolk Fellows. And I can't explain this to you. But on the mission field, I had a tremendously large number of people around me at all times after the first year.

[10:20] It took me a year to find anybody. We were basically alone for a year. I would get up every morning early. Maybe I would be down into my office by 6 or 6.30.

Not because I love to get up early, but the sun comes up at 4.30 in the morning. It's pretty hard to sleep. I mean, the sun comes up at 4.30. You're laying in bed and it's like God shining a bright light in your face.

So I kept my eyes closed as long as I could until the sun got hot and finally I'd get up. One missionary told me how to hang stuff over my window to keep the light from getting in. But it made the wind not get in either, so I didn't enjoy that.

So I would get up and I'd go downstairs and I would prepare messages and nobody was there to listen to them. I would go to church on Sundays and I can remember Betty and I working as hard as we could go.

And we finally broke 10. I couldn't wait to get to double digits. Don't forget there were six in my family. It only takes four to get to double digits. But it took a while.

[11:13] And we finally got to double digits, rented a car on the way home. And Betty said, I guess you're happy. We had 10. I said, no, I need 12 or 15. And then we got 15. She said, I bet you're happy. I said, no, I'm looking for 25.

And that's one of my problems. I have never been really as happy as I ought to be. But I want you to know, I want you to know I was surrounded, but I was alone. And so when Paul Forsythe would come to Peru and get off that airplane, it was like his biggest vacation.

I later found out when he was dying, we were watching videos. I was showing him videos of Brother Paul in Peru. And his own family said, we don't know that man. Because in the States, as a pastor and all the pressure and all the things in the ministry, he was an uptight guy.

But when he got to Peru, he was the craziest guy. He had the biggest time. He would come into Peru. It was always funny. I'd be driving down the road. He'd start yelling at me, stop, stop. And I'd slam on the brakes.

He'd say, there's dogs fighting over there. Let's watch. And we'd stop. And these two dogs are fighting. And he would say, which one are you pulling for? I'm like, I ain't pulling for any one of the dumb dogs. Let's go. And he wanted to watch the whole dog fight.

[12:18] He got in our church. And he'd see all these people getting saved. And he'd say, all these Peruvians just doing something for God. He stood up one Sunday. I think it was a Sunday morning. He stood up on the first pew on the left there.

And he took out his handkerchief. He started swinging it around his head. All the Peruvians asked me later, what was going on? I said, that's just a crazy American thing. Don't worry. We're not doing that here. That's the way he does it.

We don't do that stuff. But they said, what? I said, he was excited. They said, well, why do you swing a handkerchief when you're excited? I said, I don't know. Something they do in the States. But anyway, it's a tremendous thing when you can really be a friend.

It is a tremendous thing when you can really be a friend. It refreshed Paul. So let me give you the ones. Number one, you ought to know, pray. Let's be careful to pray for them and let them know we're praying.

Romans 15:30, the Bible says, I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit that you strive together with me in your prayers to God for me.

[13 : 15] So he said, strive with me. Get involved in this. Get involved in this. Really be involved in what's going on. Really be praying. Now, I am constantly being reminded by the missionaries of their needs, and I've got a whole bunch of them I'm supposed to be keeping up with.

But I would like to challenge you. It was a great thing. There was this lady. Her name was Jean Smith. And Jean wrote me a letter. She was going through a divorce when I met her, and she had come down to the front of the church, and I was working at a church in Marietta.

I was on their Christian school staff, and the pastor pointed at me. I was like 22, and Jean was a lot older. I mean, probably 40 or something, and I thought she was really old.

I remember that. Now I don't think 40 is old at all, amen? But I remember I went up, and I knelt beside her, and I prayed for her, and somehow that lady fell in love with the work that God would do through Betty and I.

From then on, she kept up. When I went to Cartersville to start a church, Jean would call me up, and she'd say, do you have any good commentaries? And I said, well, you know, I'm getting stuff together.

[14 : 24] So she said, well, I've got every Oliver B. Green commentary they make, and I'm giving them all to you. And so ever so often she'd call me up, and she'd just bring me books or send me books. She sent me a red Schofield Bible one time.

I used it for a long time. She cared. Over the next 30 years, Jean wrote me a letter almost every month, always handwritten, not that legible, not as bad as mine, but not that legible.

She always prayed for me. She always told me what was going on in her life, what was going on in her church. She knew what was going on in mine. She'd mention it in her prayer letters, and she prayed for me all the time.

She would send great big love offerings, \$10, \$15. That was the money, but she cared. I've told this all over the United States.

I do not believe that I did as much in Peru as Jean did. She was striving together with me. I'm sure I've told you this one, but Thurman Wade was the director of the mission agency I was with, and a lady came up to him one night at a conference, and I saw that actual prayer card.

[15 : 27] I'm sure it's gone now. I probably saw it 30 years ago. And she came up to him and said, can I get a new prayer card from you? And he said, of course. And he pulled out a prayer card, and she said, well, you might want this one.

And she handed him a prayer card, and the only thing left on it was his name, Wade. And what she had done is she said, every time I pray for you, I just put a hash mark. And she said, then I put an X, and she said, hash, X, hash, X.

And the thing was covered on the front and on the back. Brother Wade carried that in his Bible for years. He knew she prayed. I can't explain this to you unless you stand where I stand and do what I do, but I stand between the living and the dead.

I stand between the living and the dead. I do it in a foreign language. I do it in a place where maybe I'm not that wanted, where I've been. The Catholic priest in Adikipa, one Sunday morning, no kids came.

All the guys would go out, and they would walk up and down the streets, invite the kids. They'd come in leading, 5, 10, 15 kids. And one Sunday morning, they all came into the church, and no kids came. And I said, what in the world?

[16 : 32] Where are all the kids? And they said, the priest told them, you're selling organs. You're selling eyeballs. You're selling livers. And I said, what? It's ridiculous. And they said, well, everybody believes it.

And so I said, well, y'all go out next week and ask them, how many kids have come home without an eyeball? Let's just see if he'd sold any of them. And, well, two or three weeks later, the kids started coming back. But it really gets old.

And it's praying for you. It helps you know you're in the battle and somebody cares. Are you involved in praying? Do they know you're praying? This literally happened. And I walked into the post office one day. And I walked up to the lady.

I was going to lay my letter down to get it sent. This is back before you had email, you know. And it was an envelope paper, envelope inside it, stamp on the outside. Probably never seen that. We used to do stuff like that a long time ago.

Days of the Pony Express, that sort of thing. And so I'm standing there. And when I got up to the thing, she goes, I don't like you. I'm like, I live in a city of a million and a half people. There's no way this woman knows me.

[17 : 32] And I said, excuse me, I don't think we've met. And she said, you don't like Mary. I said, I love Mary. She said, no, you don't. You're a Protestant. I said, I love Mary.

She was blessed among women. She got to be the mother of the Lord Jesus. And I told her how much I love Mary. She said, you didn't have that bad then. But it's a lonely feeling. And prayer makes a major difference.

You may not believe that, but does God answer prayer? Does God hear prayer? And you could get involved if you would become a praying person. Number two. And by the way, can I just say this?

Facebook is really hurting missions in a lot of ways. Because it's so romantic looking. Everybody's got this idea, man, everything must be great. Well, it ain't all that great. But you don't contain smell in pictures.

And Peru has totally changed. But I can promise you, if you have any idea what urine smells like, that was what it smelled like in my day. I literally. People could walk up behind me with Peruvian money and stick it behind my head and I go, Peruvian money.

[18 : 38] I could smell it. It's not like that now. Things totally changed. I just want you to know it's a different place. Not as romantic as you think. I can't explain the stress of a language. You know, you let Sergi come up here and try to lead singing and you kind of understand that.

You let Tiny Tim come up here and preach and you see him sweat enough water to take a bath in. And he said, I wasn't nervous. I was just hot. I said, yeah, you were hot. Real hot.

And you add on top of that pressure of standing here, which I'm kind of used to. But the difference is now you're in another language. And you've got a little bit of pride, which comes with the territory, I guess.

We get to be too prideful. But you don't like people laughing at you. You don't like people acting like they can't understand you. So the stress of language, of culture, the stress of missing people, missing your family.

Our brother-in-law called Betty one year and said, I'll be home for Christmas when she couldn't be home for Christmas. And that was a real pleasant thing. I told him I was going to kill him, but I haven't.

[19 : 42] Number two, send some care packages. Send some care packages. It's a pretty wild thing to get a gift, to get a card, to get anything from back home.

You can even do it on the Internet. But it's pretty wild. In our day, I used to tell people, I would take them to the post office, and I'd say, this is the missionary wailing wall.

Because nobody ever sends you anything. You don't understand that, but they don't. This is back before the days of Internet. The fact is, there was a time in Arequipa when the post office went on strike for six months.

Six months. No mail in, no mail out. I walked up in the post office, and all the people that were supposed to be working were sitting there.

And I said, can I mail this letter? And they said, nope. And they were having what they called a strike of fallen arms. My arms have fallen, and I can't pick them up.

[20 : 45] And so they would sit there, and you'd stick it up, and they'd say, nope, arms down, can't do it. And so they wouldn't mail it. And no mail came in. It all disappeared. It got burned or something. And so I just want you to know that even that little package, I noticed Brother Tony's church was sending a bunch of stuff on the Internet.

It was on Facebook. You could see all that they were doing. It makes a big difference. You could send a gift card to buy logos, iTunes, Amazon. Send us plain old cash. They always like that.

Number three, a note or a card. A note or a card. A birthday card. Personalized. Personalized with your handwriting. I was on the Internet one day, and Rebecca Shoemaker made the comment, I was having a bad day.

And I saw the letter that had come from Vision for my birthday, which Miss Maria Morgan fixes.

She prepares all those. I handwrite them, usually with red ink. It's just like I like red. So I write with a red ink pen, and she said, I was a little discouraged, and I just wanted to open that letter and see that horrible chicken scratching in red that you had sent.

[21 : 57] Felt good. I didn't do anything. Miss Maria did a lot more than I did, but not that much. But it made a big difference to a lady that I cannot explain to you the kind of woman Rebecca Shoemaker is.

Some of the harshest conditions any of our missionaries live in, when it gets down to about 90 degrees, you feel like the air conditioner is on over there. I remember one afternoon we was walking home, and I said, man, it's cool.

And I looked up and saw the thermometer. It was 90 degrees. I said, I don't know when I've ever called 90 cool. Amen? And I told Keith I was preaching there, and he had a thermometer in the corner right in the roof.

You could see it there. I said, what do you have that thing here for? That really made me miserable. I hate looking up there and seeing how hot I am. I'm already feeling hot, and it reminds me that's a terrible thing. But send them some notes.

Send them on Facebook. Send them on email. Give them a Facebook call or a Skype call, whatever. Start a discussion. Start a discussion. Now, here's the problem.

[22 : 53] Missionaries are supposed to communicate with you. If they don't, I'm after them. I'm always saying, send too many emails or everybody gets tired of getting them. Make sure the correspondence comes. But who answers back?

Every now and then, I just send back, praying for you, buddy. And almost every time, they answer back, thank you. It's like nobody ever reads this stuff. So ask the ministry of how you can help. Ask them what they need.

See if the need is something you can do for them. See if the need is something you can do for them. If you're unable, then maybe see if you could get other people to help. You know, Trent has made a move right now.

He's trying to help Scott Newton in Spain. He's trying to help raise money because he wants to be a blessing. He can't give \$500, but he can try to raise it.

And he's raised over \$100 so far. People just giving little amounts of money here and there. You can make a difference. Share the need with your church and your friends. Let the missionary talk. Can I just say this?

[23 : 50] When a missionary comes off the field, he needs to talk. He needs a debrief. He needs to tell you where he's been. He wants you to be interested in his ministry. He wants to talk about it.

And here's the way it works. Hey, glad to have you. Want to go get something to eat? Let's talk about the Braves. He wants to say, let me tell you where I've been. Let me tell you what it feels like. Let me tell you what I've been going through.

He wants to share his heart. Start a discussion. Let him share with you what's going on. Listen to his stories. Don't waste time on regular stuff.

He needs to tell you about his hurts, his blessings. He needs to know that you really care about him and his ministry. And let me just explain something to you about a guy in the ministry. He can't hardly separate his ministry from him.

He's the minister of a ministry. And so how goes the ministry is how he goes. He said it shouldn't be like that. I didn't say it should be like that. I just said that's how it is. And so a missionary to Peru, literally, it got to where Austin Gardner Peru.

[24 : 51] Austin Gardner Peru. I couldn't, even today, if I watch a TV show and they say the word Peru, man, my ears perk up. Peru lifts my spirits. I want to hear about it.

Be careful. Number five. Do something wild and crazy for a missionary. He might get mad, but John Pearson.

Betty and I had come home, got off the airplane. You're exhausted. You've been flying. And John Pearson calls and says, Sandy and I are sending you two to a cabin. We picked a cabin.

And they did it several times. And I cannot tell you, not the kind of cabin I rent. It was the kind of cabin, notch your socks off. I mean, I remember walking into one of them and they had more bedrooms than days we were staying there.

And it was only two of us. I'm like, good night. We could have brought a whole family here. Every kid we got, we could have brought off 30 of us. You know, we could have had room. Do something wild and crazy. Give a special offering that can be used any way they want.

[25 : 54] Give some money for the family so they can take a few days off. One of my problems, and I don't know if all the young guys have this, but one of my problems was, since you're doing a heaven and hell thing, since you're trying to save souls, when do you take a vacation?

So I never could. We were in Peru for like 18 years. I don't know if my kids remember a vacation. I don't think that was a good deal. I think I could probably do it, but I shouldn't have done it to my kids.

But I never had enough money, and I had a ton of it. The church has supported me like crazy, but I always spent more than I could get in trying to do ministry.

So how about helping them take a few days, sending the kids to an amusement park or something like that? Number six, become an advocate. Three minutes. Become an advocate for them. Get them mentioned in the bulletin.

Bring them up for prayer. Tell their stories. Tell their stories. Get a team together to love on that missionary. Get a team together. Get you two or three other families and sit around with them and say, We're going to love missionary A, B, C, whatever it is, whoever it is.

[27 : 01] And let's figure out what we can do for him. And just come up with the wildest, craziest things. Let him know he's loved. There is a basic rule. Out of sight, out of mind.

And if you don't believe that's true, go to the mission field. I had a pastor and I had another preacher, Brother Tony, who I loved deeply.

And they were like my best buddies. And I would come home and it had been in my prayer letter. And by the time an email came out, I was like the first guy who was spamming everybody. I had Internet when nobody had Internet.

And so as soon as I'd go into a church and say, Pastor, you should sign up for Internet. He said, I wouldn't get any email. I said, oh, yeah, you will. I'll take care of that. I'll send you stuff regular. They said, good. I would love to get something on the Internet.

I said, no problem. I'll take care of you. And I sent them stuff all the time. And I came in. Brother Tony said, I didn't know you was coming in. I said, I only sent it in like 50 emails, three months worth of prayer letters.

[28 : 01] Because when you're gone, I'm guilty of it too. I'm not picking on you. So get some people together and stay in touch. What's going on with our guys? What's happening?

There's so many in our church. It's a blessing to be out of a church with so many missionaries. It's also almost a curse. Because if there's only one, we might keep up with it. But since there's so many, we can't.

Last thing. Provide something to help them grow. It doesn't take a missionary long. When they start deputation, they're at their lowest point in their life.

When they come to me about deputation, they're scared to death. Don't know how they're going to get the money. Don't know how they're going to pay their bills. The first six months, they nearly starve. So you know, the first six months, they really nearly starve.

A lot of them, if it weren't for somebody helping them, if it wasn't somebody loaning a car, the first six months could be torture. After six months, the money starts coming in, and they get to a comfortable stage. At a year, they're pretty comfortable.

[28 : 59] If they've been on deputation a year, they wouldn't mind settling for 10, except they get tired of traveling. Because they start getting enough money. But then they land on the field. So, and all of a sudden, they're trying to learn a language.

And then, after they learned the language the other day, Keith Shoemaker said to me, he said, nobody told me how hard it gets. He said they told me deputation was hard. That wasn't hard. Learning language was hard. That wasn't hard.

My first church was hard. Now, I'm trying to work on these churches. This is really getting hard. I need you to get over here. So, I just want you to know, help them grow. You could get them some Bible courses where they could study more Bible, where they could have some more material.

You could help them go to a conference somewhere where they're going. But help them grow. They ought to be growing. So, I'd just like to say to you, it's a goer-sender night. They are our soldiers.

And they are on the front lines. And they are dealing with stuff you don't know about. Matt Allen's dad, I was in a conference. I was preaching at a conference. And Matt Allen's dad was there. And Matt Allen's dad got up and he said, you know we don't tell you the truth.

[30 : 03] He said, we don't tell you the bad stuff. Or you wouldn't even want to help us. He said, so we come in here. We say, well, God's doing great stuff. We don't tell you. It's been a long time since you did anything great. So, I'm bragging on this last thing because it's been a while.

But that's the way it can be. It can be on the mission field. Is anybody coming? I came home from my first furlough. I came home. We were there in 88, 89, and 90.

In December of 90, we came back to the States so Betty could be sure and see her dad. She thought he would die before she could make it home for a furlough.

She came home. We stayed for two Christmases. I went back in the middle of that for about two weeks. I went back to Peru. Left the family here. And I went back to Peru. But when I landed in 1992, January of 1992, when I landed, Don Bond met me there.

Don Bond was the old guy. He was like my age, and I was like in my 30s. And Don said, I'm just going to tell you, I've never seen a missionary arrive at the field with so many problems.

[31 : 06] But you got it. He said, every one of your guys have messed up. They've stolen your truck. They've blown the motor. They've stolen your stuff. And I'm at the airport. I'm like, I'm so excited to be in Peru.

And he's just dumping truckloads of water on me. And it was bad. It was really bad. I had to go into the church. And all these Peruvians, I'm the only American.

And I've got to go in there, and I've got to say, pastors are all stepping down. They've all messed up. Great guy. He's one of the best in the church.

His name is Miguel Ocampo. So Miguel's got to be pushing 80 now. And Miguel said, the preacher don't understand. Boys are going to be boys.

They just mess around like boys. And I'm like, boys might be boys, but this is God's house. And boys don't do what boys do in God's house. They do it when they ain't in God's house. But here they're supposed to be different. And they had actually taken my truck and driven it up and down the street, leaning out the window and offering rides to people for money.

[32 : 11] They stole my truck, blew the motor, destroyed everything. And I called some friends. And I said, are you going to come visit?

And he said, why? Your whole ministry fell apart. Why would I come? You realize, man, I am alone. Brother Paul called.

He's Brother Paul. Like my hero, buddy. He called. He said, hey, buddy. That's what he always said to me. Hey, it's costing like three or four dollars a minute to call. He called every month.

Talked to me at least 30 minutes. Hey, buddy. I said, hey. He said, heard you got problems. I said, yeah. He said, you want me to get on a plane? Come and I'll beat the living slop out of our last one of them.

You want me to? I said, no, Brother Paul. They ain't going to do you good. He said, I know. He said, listen to me. You're acting ridiculous. So what? Things are going wrong. That means you get up and go back at it, boy. He said, you go in there and you just kick their rears.

[33 : 14] You get them back in gear. You can do this. Don't you quit. I hung up the phone. I said, that guy's crazy. They said, go in there and kick their rears and get them in gear. And I did.

I needed that call. I needed that call. And so I would challenge you. This is a big deal. You're a helper here. It's a big deal. We could be divorced from this.

But I look back there and there's Phillip Basham. I wonder what Phillip's going through. You can see him on Facebook. That ain't the real Phillip. That ain't the frustration he's feeling.

I mean, everybody takes pictures. You know? Check out my baby's booger. I mean, good night. I've seen more stuff about babies. You know, when I was a kid, you hated people that had grandparents had to show you the picture of their grandkids.

Now it's not the grandparents. It's our young people showing us grandparents all their kids. Amen? I wonder what Mark's going through. I wonder what's going on with Scott Newton. I wonder what's going on with Mark Tulsa.

[34 : 15] I wonder what Tyler's really going through. I wonder what's really going on in Chris Gardner's life. He's had it hard. He'll never tell you that. He's had it hard.

I wonder what's going on in David's life. Thrown in the middle of the lion's den. People criticize him. Harsh on him. Because he's not Austin. He's supposed to be out.

He's 29 years old. I was 32 when I got there. But people, instead of loving him and helping him, are beating up on him. And look over there. There's Jeff Bush.

There's Kevin White. What's going on with Bo Carpenter? He talks to you about how great it was on Christmas on the west side when nobody came? You know that ain't what he really thinks. You know what it's like at the end of the night to say, dang man, we went a thousand bucks in the hole here at our church and nobody came but regular folks.

They need you. This is a big deal. I hope you'll really get involved and help them. Father, I love you. Thank you for your wonderful people. Thank you for those that are doing so much, the ones they can see.

[35 : 18] And help us with the ones we can't see. And I'll give you praise in Jesus' name. Amen. This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. For more information, log on to www.visionbaptist.com, where you can find our service times, location, contact information, and more audio and video recordings.