

Robert & Kelli Canfield Blessing Service

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 06 April 2014

[0 : 00] 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. Thank you. And Pastor Frick, Robert always talks about you, loves you, looks up to you, and so we're honored to have you preach tonight.

Thank you, Preacher. Well, I thank you for the opportunity to share a few words together with you guys on this occasion. We've enjoyed a number of things together.

I have not been around Robert enough to tell a lot of humorous stories. I just have shared a lot of good fellowship. And we enjoy bagels at Beebe's, barbecue at Amos.

If you've ever been to Amos barbecue, the little hole in the ground, and we enjoy that. And recently we've gotten into heroes, lamb heroes, really good stuff.

And Kelly, we've had some meals with her as well, some Italian food, and some barbecue as well, and certainly enjoy the fellowship.

[1 : 05] Someday maybe I'll have a humorous story to tell you. But if there was somebody in the church that I would need to help move something, I would want Robert to be the one.

He has the muscle. He has the ability to be strong, and sometimes he picks things up, and I look at his face, and he doesn't even wince.

The rest of us strain and have to wear back braces or whatever. But Robert, to me, is a person who has a lot of strength. And I'd like to direct my thoughts to you guys tonight and to all of us somewhat regarding strength and weakness.

We aren't as strong sometimes as we think we are. And we aren't as weak sometimes as we think we are.

We have the feelings at times that we can do things that we shouldn't be trying to do, and then there are things that we should be doing that we just don't feel like we can get done, we can't do.

[2 : 16] The book of Joshua starts out with Joshua being instructed of the Lord to become now the leader of Israel in the replacement of Moses.

We know of Caleb that when Joshua and Caleb went out to be spies, they came back with a good report, honest report.

They were confident in faith. They were committed to victory. They were ready to go. God was going to fight with them. They were going to be able to take the land. Let's do it now.

God is with us. But because of the weakness of ten spies, the whole nation had to wander in the wilderness for 40 years.

Now, Caleb was 40 years old when he went out to be a spy, wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. At the age of 80, he is determined to take the land that has been promised to him.

[3 : 18] And we sing the song, I Want That Mountain, and they were the words that he said. That mountain was promised to me, and I want it. I'm ready for it. I'm as strong at 80 as I was at 40.

Now, how old was Joshua when he was one of the spies? I don't have an answer for that, but I know that he probably was at least maybe 20 when he was chosen to be a spy, and 40 years later, he'd be maybe 60.

He could be 70. He could be 80. But the Lord gives him some unique words as he commissions him to take over the leadership of the nation of Israel.

And I'll just pick out a few thoughts here. But three times, three times, the Lord tells Joshua to be strong.

Joshua 1 verse 6, Be strong and of a good courage. Verse number 7, Only be thou strong and very courageous.

[4 : 31] And again in verse number 9, Have not I commanded thee, Be strong and of a good courage.

Be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed. For the Lord thy God is with thee, whithersoever thou goest. So the words are there for Joshua to be strong.

Personalities of people don't change a lot through the years. We at times think that there are changes that can be made in my life, but generally speaking, if you are a person that has a sense of fear when you're young, you'll probably have a sense of fear on things when you're 30 or 40 or 50 or 60 or 70 or 80.

Now if you're one that's fearless when you're 20, you probably will be somewhat that way when you get older. I tend to think that Joshua might have been a little bit on the side of where he maybe lacked a little bit of internal confidence.

A little bit of self-assurance lacking. And the Lord had to tell him three times, and not just to say, let your strength come out, or let your courage come out, but be strong and very courageous.

[5 : 57] And he said, Have not I commanded you to be strong and very courageous? For each of us, the moments come when there is a demand for strength and courage.

Life is such that circumstances may come. There may be a mountain to climb, a race to run, a river to cross, a battle to fight, a field to plant, a harvest to be brought in, and they will all in their own unique times and places require strength.

And the command will be, be strong. And especially speaking spiritually, continue to be strong and of very good courage.

In 2 Timothy 2 verse 1, Paul said to Timothy, his son in the faith, Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

Timothy, we look at as a young man, as a pastor, and maybe somewhat, we say, maybe a little bit on the timid side, maybe insecure a little bit, and the words come from his mentor, from Paul, be strong, be strong, be strong.

[7 : 30] Why did it take three times for the Lord to say to Joshua, be strong, and of a good courage? I don't know, every good message needs to have three points, doesn't it?

And the Lord preached a message to him that had three points the same. Didn't change them. Be strong, and of a good courage. Only be thou strong, and very courageous.

Have not I commanded thee, be strong, and of a good courage. And my thoughts for you tonight are just that. If I can encourage you in anything, as ministry goes forward, challenges come in ministry, be strong, and of good courage.

God's grace is sufficient for us. Paul said that when I am weak, then am I strong. And there are some things that for us are just seemingly opposites.

The way up is down in the spiritual life. The way to gain is to give. The way to live is to die. And Paul said, In weakness am I made strong.

[8 : 34] Therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that I may have the grace of God abiding upon me, the strength that comes from Him. Paul also said, I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me.

Strength doesn't come from us inside. The strength comes from Him above. But exercise that strength. Be strong and of good courage. We're going to have Brother Trent come and preach.

And right after that, Brother Jeff, and preach to you for just a minute. And I want you to know, I was standing there thinking, as all the testimonies are being given and everything else, all of our lives ought to be making a difference.

You don't have to be a foreign missionary for your life to make a difference, for it to impact people. And I hope that you are enjoying realizing that God's using people that maybe you don't see out in front of everybody, but do a great job here.

I want to get to talk to Robert Kelly tonight. I've been looking forward to this night because there are two people that it's hard to get them just to sit down while we try to do some things to honor them. It's even hard to honor them when they're not helping us do it.

[9 : 36] I tried to get Robert to order his sword, but as soon as I sent the email, I thought, no, that's bad form. I'll order the sword. I appreciate their friendship so much.

Some people are made friends because you're put in the same school or same hobby, but we have a friendship that's been forged in the work of the Lord. And I love it every day to get to work with these two here and get to see their kids grow up and love the Lord as well.

A couple years ago at camp, I introduced Robert and I said how much I love working with him. He's usually drinking Gatorade in the morning when people are on their second cup of coffee because he's sweating and working and whatever he's doing.

I said, but there's nobody in the world that I've ever met that I'd rather work beside every day of my life than that man. And Jacob Taube came to me and said, that was a great introduction before somebody preached, but did you really meant it?

And I said, I really meant it with all my heart. And if I could ask selflessly, a prayer of mine would be if God would allow our families to work together until the end, it would be one of the greatest honors of my life.

[10 : 35] How do you give more than 100%? What's the challenge? It's when you are able to draw in somebody else's life more out of them. And Robert gives more than 100% because he gives his all, but I get more out of my life by being with him and everybody around me draws something out of them.

And that's an incredible thing to do. I wish I would have played football in high school so that I'd be bigger like Robert, but I wish I would have played high school football and played with this guy because I bet you he made everybody around him so much better.

I remember when we first came here, there's a timeline and a handout you got today and I remember him pulling up in that truck and quoting his dad all the time, my dad says, my dad says, and I'm glad he still says his dad says, but he also knows some Bible as well.

But he was always talking about my dad. I thought, man, what a gift. And I thought, I would like the opportunity someday to thank his parents and Miss Kelly's parents as well. I was at Way of the Cross a few weeks ago and I said, I know you guys are proud that Kelly Perkins came to this church and this elderly gentleman said, yeah, we are.

He stood up. He didn't say amen or hallelujah. He said, yeah, we are. And I love that. And these are people that we, yeah, we are. We're proud of that. And so from the bottom of my heart, I thank you parents for raising my friends here.

[11 : 49] They have changed my life working with them. And they challenge me to do more all the time. There's a story in 2 Samuel 23, 17. It makes me think of Robert and Kelly here.

And you know what the story says. David Long, verse 15. And oh, that one would give me the drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem which is by the gate. So somebody wanted something to drink and three guys overheard it.

I would be the fourth guy and say, well, that's a real shame, David. You should have thought about that before you brought us to a cave. But maybe later we'll get something to drink. But we're fresh out of water right now.

But the Roberts of the world said, hey, if you want water, I'm going to go get some water. And then it goes on to say that in verse 16, three men break through the host of the Philistines and drink water out of the well of Bethlehem that was by the gate and took it and brought it to David.

Nevertheless, he would not drink thereof but poured it out into the Lord. And he said, be it far from me, O Lord, that I should do this. Is not this the blood of men that went in the jeopardy of their lives? Therefore he would not drink it.

[12 : 49] Then things did these three mighty men. So I always wondered what was going through those guys' heads. They risked their life. It could have been bloodshed. And then David poured it out.

Watching Robert and Kelly's life, I can't add to the scripture, but you know what I think those three guys did when David poured it out? They fell on their knees and worshipped. Because they never went to get water for the king.

They were just serving God. They said, if there's an opportunity, no matter how small it is, no matter how much inconvenience it is to me, I will do it. And I believe the acts of those three men motivated David to say, based upon your action, I want to take whatever I have and just pour it out to the Lord.

Robert and Kelly, every day working with you guys. It's easy at big events and here and just throughout life to make decisions. But on a daily basis, just to serve God when nobody's listening or nobody's paying attention to us, watching you guys make me want to pour my life out.

The way that you just give your best for the smallest things. And nobody can love the way you guys love unless you believe that you are showing love to people as an expression of your love for God.

[13 : 58] And so I gave you a trick in here. They don't even really like you guys. They just really love God. And because of that, they do everything that you would ever imagine and so much. Kelly at the mission, she ought to be looking for less things than to do for the missionaries.

But she's always looking for something else. Robert's always doing something that's not in his area of responsibility that he has to worry about. But if he sees a need, he's going to meet it.

And so I thank you so much. And I know it even sounds selfish, but I am thankful for the impact you have on my life on a daily basis. And I pray the God of heaven, I know he'll keep us together, but I selfishly ask that the God of heaven will allow us to serve beside each other until his return.

When we come to the New Testament and the book of Acts, the church is growing quickly. The church of Jerusalem at first, and then it goes into the church of Antioch, and God begins to bless and things begin to happen.

But things begin to happen because God's people are all behind and pushing with all their might and with their blood, their energy, and everything they have. When we come to Acts chapter number 18, we find a married couple by the name of Aquila and Priscilla.

[15 : 05] And Aquila and Priscilla, they were a blessing to the church. And in my humble opinion, Aquila and Priscilla, the modern term, would be Robert and Kelly. Because the honest truth is, it's a blessing when you have one person who is faithful and loves God and loves others and is serving in the church.

But it's a double blessing when you have a married couple that both of them are helping and both of them are pushing forward. So allow me to say just a few things, Robert, about some of the qualities that Aquila and Priscilla had, some of the great things that they had, and some of the qualities, the same qualities, that Robert and Kelly have.

First of all, as you would see in Acts chapter number 18 and verse number 26, that when they grabbed, they saw a policy come through there, and then Aquila and Priscilla, they grabbed them, they took them to the side, and they began to explain to them a little bit more.

First of all, they were dedicated to God. You know, the honest truth is, ministry is important and things and friends are important, but the most important thing is God. When I look at Robert and Kelly's life, they're dedicated to God.

They love God. You know, Aquila and Priscilla would never have been able to tell Apollos a little bit more about the ministry and about God if they wouldn't have known God. Robert and Kelly just don't come here.

[16 : 11] They have a personal walk and a relationship with our God. So they're dedicated to God, but not only are they dedicated to God, they're dedicated to God's work. You see, they were there present when Apollos came and preached, so they didn't just go there.

They were involved there. They were there all the time. You know, many of us come to church and we enjoy getting to sit in a nice seat and get to hear and see the cleanliness, but can I tell you, Robert and Kelly don't just come to church.

They come here early and they make sure the seats are put up and they make sure things are clean and they pick up things, they clean up things. They are always busy in God's work. These are dedicated Christians.

These are the ones that I wish we had a whole big group of because these are the ones that make a difference in the ministry. They're not only dedicated to God, not only dedicated to God's ministry, but they're also dedicated to each other.

Robert, I challenge you with all my heart and I encourage you at the same time, always be dedicated to your family. You know, it's a blessing that when a family serves God, but let's be honest, when we serve God, when there's families at home, it begins to have problems, it brings problems in our lives and those problems in our lives bring problems in the ministry and then in church and we just, we can't go forward.

[17 : 21] Let me just tell you friends, Robert and Kelly are a great example of not just serving God, but serving God together as a couple. And when they finish here, when Aquila and Priscilla finish talking to Paulus, they make their way out and Paulus continues on his journey and he goes out and he preaches more and more people are saved and more people are blessed and more things happen and the church grows just because there was a married couple who was in that church who loved God.

Robert and Kelly are this married couple in the modern terms of Aquila and Priscilla who make this church a better place to come to and who make God a wonderful, something wonderful to serve because we see other people who are on the same team.

And so I encourage you, Robert, continue on with the same attitude. Keep a sweet spirit and always love God, be dedicated to God and to each other. Well, I would like to talk to you just a minute to the two of you.

First, I'd like you all to turn in your Bibles, if you would, to 1 Samuel chapter 23 and verse 10. The words are written on the sword that you'll find out here below. The words are written on the sword saying, His hand clave to the sword.

1 Samuel chapter 23 and verse 10. And what's going on is a man of God is in a battle for God and his hand literally sticks to the sword.

[18 : 36] He has held it in his hand so long. 1 Samuel 23, 10. That must not be it. That's 2 Samuel. Thank you, Robert. Appreciate your help on that. Turn that to 2 Samuel.

It's all your fault, Cannon. 2 Samuel chapter 23, verse 10. The Bible says that there he arose and smote the Philistines until his hand was weary and his hand clave under the sword and the Lord brought a great victory that day and the people returned after him only to spoil.

I think it's an exciting story here. This man, I can see him fighting and holding that sword and swinging it as hard as he could all day long and when he finally gets ready to go home and he tries to put the sword down and tries to stick it in the sheath, he can't get his hand off the sword.

Those muscles have just contracted and held on so hard that he can't get his hand to go home. I can imagine him arriving home and his wife saying, Honey, put your sword down and he can't put his sword down because he's held on so long, so tightly and she's probably, I don't know, putting coal compresses on it.

She's putting heat on it. She's doing everything she can to help him get his hand off the sword because he was in the middle of the battle and he wouldn't quit and he wouldn't give up and he was hanging on with everything in him so that he could make a difference for the Lord and for the kingdom.

[19 : 55] I don't know if you know this, but Kelly faces a life-threatening, debilitating disease every day of her life. She wakes up every morning knowing that this is going to be a tougher day than any of us know about in this room and yet she continually serves.

I think sometimes she gets a little bit aggravated at me because I will walk across the room and I'll say, Are you okay? And she'll say, I'm not hiding it, Will. But I watch and I see the little grimace, I see the little things in her face, but she says, I need to walk, I need to work, I need to go at it.

She's still hanging on to doing something for Jesus every day of her life. That is a model for all of us to not let excuses. These people aren't mad about the preaching and leaving for that reason.

They've got a whole other church going downtown. Amen? And I love these people. I mean, they're doing such a great job down in Cobb County. But she's facing this debilitating disease and she continues on for the Lord Jesus.

And I am thrilled with that. I'm also thrilled that all the time I've worked with Robert, he has put his hand on that sword and he hasn't let go of the sword. He's been trying to learn how to use it better.

[21 : 05] He's been trying to learn how to fight with it better. He's been trying to make his life count for the kingdom and for the cause. And so, Robert, I'd like to challenge both of you to hold on to the sword because things are going to get tough.

They're going to get tougher as you get older, as you do more ministry. You're going to feel sometimes unappreciated. You're going to feel sometimes that people don't care as much about you as they should. Tonight's the opposite of that feeling.

But let me give you a hint about how many times this is going to happen in your life. Once. After this, you ain't got nothing to look forward to until you get to heaven. Say amen. And so, I just want you to know tonight, keep your hand on the sword and keep fighting.

Keep your hand on the sword and keep fighting. Stay in the battle. Stay in the battle every day. Realize that you're fighting against the devil. But I would then like to take and go with you, I'll get this verse wrong too.

Go with me to Ezekiel chapter 2 and verse 5. One more verse. Ezekiel chapter 2 and verse 5. The Lord sends Ezekiel to do a work amongst a people that he knows won't repent.

[22 : 08] He knows they're hard-headed people. He knows that they're belligerent and rebellious people. He knows they'll never make a change. He knows that they won't repent. He knows, he tells Ezekiel, go on and preach to them.

They're rebellious and I'm not going to pay attention to you. They're not going to listen to you. But you go preach to them. And then he puts in the bottom part of Ezekiel 2.5, he says, but they will know that there was a man of God amongst them.

But they will know that there was a prophet of God amongst them. They may not change and may not repent. And I'd like to say something to you, Robert. You know, while we were in Kenya, the nickname that we gave Robert was Kifado, which means buffalo.

Right? And we said that because he, I don't know why that happened, but anyway, he got it. Jason, I don't know. Anyway, he's always strong and always tough, even though his mother did call down here after he'd only been here for a few days and she said, my little boy's losing weight and y'all need to feed him better.

Well, I want you to know we've done a good job. Robert's one of the few men in this church that's bigger than I am. Say amen to that. So, I want to challenge you with this, Robert.

[23 : 26] I want to say this to you. I want to tell you this as maybe a spiritual dad. You're not over. You're not done. And you are always going to be a servant. But I wrote in your little letter that you'll find in there if you take the time to read them.

I believe God has big plans for you. I believe God is going to do big and wonderful things. I believe that you're more in a preparation stage than you would ever believe. I believe the day is coming that you will stand forward and you'll swing that sword like never before and God will do greater and bigger things than you than you ever imagined.

You may see yourself as an assistant pastor. You may see yourself as a guy that always helps me to do things and takes care of Trent and does all the stuff around here. But I want to tell you that they are going to know there's been a prophet amongst them.

And I am very proud of you and I'm excited about what God's going to do and I just want to challenge you to hang in there. And I would like to tell you, Kelly, I love you and Betty loves you and our church loves you and you have somebody here.

I put this in your letter. You always have us here. And I know you hurt and I know you deal with things that none of us understand and I know that things are rough for you but you're not alone. You're part of a church. And this church is more than just people that come sit on the pew together.

[24 : 37] I really do believe they care about you. They may not know that you have the issues and the problems that you have to deal with. She has muscular dystrophy and it's a debilitating disease. It's a life-threatening disease.

And if anybody needs our love and our care, it's Kelly and I just want to challenge you to know that you are loved by our little church. We love you and we love Robert and we believe in you and I challenge you no matter how many times the battle gets hot, the many times the discouraging arrows come flying at you that you trust Jesus and you look to Him.

Hold on to the sword and keep living in such a way that they'll know. When we're all dead and the time's coming and the Lord lays us down and we're in a casket, the one thing I'd like them to say is when I die, well, we do know one thing.

He was God's man and I challenge you to keep that in your life. Father, I love you and I thank you so very much for how good you've been to us and the kindness that you've shown to us. And I pray tonight that you would let Robert and Kelly know in a little small way that we love them like we've never been able to tell them.

And Lord, I just pray that tonight they would leave knowing that they are loved, they would leave knowing that they are cared about, they would leave knowing that you are working in their lives. I pray, dear God, that you would bless every bit of their service.

[25 : 51] And Lord, I pray that you would let all of our church realize this is a small taste to heaven. When we get to heaven and we see just how much you've taken account of every little thing we've done and how you're going to love us and reward us and honor us just because you've been so good to us.

We love you and thank you and praise you for what you're doing. In Jesus' precious 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.