

Goer, Sender Night

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[0 : 00] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. It is our prayer that you'll be blessed by the preaching of God's Word. But let me just read this verse to you and talk to you real briefly about being missionary senders.

That's what we are. And I just would like to, I was thinking as I came in, I was in Sunbright, Tennessee. Anybody ever been to Sunbright, Tennessee? Raise your hand. That's as bad as buck snort.

It's up in East Tennessee. And it was one of my, it was a, actually I had preached for a church on Sunday morning. And we had, on our way there, Betty said, I really need to go to the bathroom.

And I said, we're running late. We're in these mountains. I don't know how long it's going to take to find this church. So just hang on. You can go when we get to the church. And she said, well, will they have a bathroom?

I said, that's the dumbest question I've ever heard. Every church has a bathroom. So we pulled up, come around a corner, and a preacher, well, a man came out. And overalls, no tie.

[0 : 57] And he comes walking out through there. And I thought, well, Lord help us, nobody's here but that guy. And I stopped and rolled and went down. He said, hey, I'm the pastor. Come on in. And so I said, well, my wife would like to go to the bathroom.

He said, there are little houses right out there in the back. And so I sent Betty out to the outhouse, rich lady from Atlanta. And she went out there. And when I got in the church, I said, all right, brother.

I said, what do you want me to do today? He said, hey, you asked me for the service. It's yours. I said, well, what do you want me to do? He said, I don't care what you do. You got Sunday school and church.

I said, well, are we going to take an offering? He said, I don't know. You want to take one? Okay. So I went to Sunday school. And I taught Sunday school. And I took a break. And then later on, I did the service.

I said, I reckon you people probably ought to give you tithes. So we're going to take up a tithe. I led singing. The whole two hours was mine. And so I was very frustrated. He took us over to his house and showed us his cards he was building and everything.

[1 : 52] And he said, I got you a new church to go to tonight. It was Stringfield Chapel Independent Baptist Church in Sunbright, Tennessee. But I walked in this little country, foot washing Baptist church.

And in the back of the building, they were all sitting around. They had letters in their hand. And they were reading prayer letters. And they'd read it. And they said, look at this. You believe in this guy? This guy read this prayer letter.

And they swapped it with prayer letters. They said, let me have that one. You already read that one. Let me have that one. And they're passing them around. And just little country guys arguing over the prayer letters. And I was very excited. I'd never, ever been in a church where people really cared that much about missionaries.

And so I would like you to be one of those churches that are so very concerned about what's going on with our missionaries that we would care. And our church has got a problem. And that is we have 21 families out of the church now.

We have more going out of the church. And so it won't take long until they'll all be disconnected. It won't take long until the guys overseas, they will be forgotten.

[2 : 56] And you'll only know the guys that are here. It won't be long until missionaries may already be for you just regular people. There they are. That's one of them missionary guys. He won't be here long. And so we don't spend much time with him.

So I would like to challenge you to do a few things if I could. I was a missionary. I desperately wanted connection to a church in America.

I know what it's like to go to the mission field and come home and wonder if anybody really gives a rip about me. I know what it's like to come home. We had, in three years, we had gone from zero believers.

We had taken over a little church. The whole adult Sunday school class met in the cab of a pickup truck. It was a double cab. You could have as many as six people sit in there. Not comfortably, but, you know, six people.

A Nissan truck. It was a Nissan truck. Or it was a Toyota truck. A small one like I have. But it had a big seat in the front. So there were six seats. And I went. And we didn't fill up.

[3 : 55] But we had three people in there. The missionary, me, and one Peruvian. And we took over that church. It had been three years. We were running close to 200 in the main church. We'd worked in four other churches.

And, I mean, I'd really, I mean, I was busting it. I was preaching six times every Sunday. And when I came back to America, I desperately wanted to go to a church that really knew me. And cared about me. And thought about me.

And basically, you show up in all the churches. Like, hey, I didn't know you was coming. Good. Thank you. That means you sure weren't praying for me. You didn't read my prayer letter. And you weren't keeping up with me at all. And I came in.

And I can remember sitting at the Whitfield Baptist Church. Beautiful auditorium. Beautiful air condition. Beautiful heat. Beautiful padded pews. And I was sitting there. And the devil jumped up on my shoulder and said, look at this.

You've got a dirt floor and a grass mat roof in your place. These people really got it knocked. And you shouldn't be on the mission field. Man, I really got, I had this jealous binge going on that night.

[4 : 53] And so I want to help you help our guys if I can. So I want to read one verse to you. And I want to share some ideas. Maybe you could jot them down. You'll be out in 11 minutes. But just some ideas that you might get to take home with you.

The Bible says in Philippians chapter 4 and verse 3, I treat thee also true yoke fellows. Help those women which labored with me in the gospel with Clement, also with my other fellow laborers whose name are in the book of life.

And you know that I have tried to call this the yoke fellow ministry. And I get it out of verse 3. A true yoke fellow. Somebody pulling in the yoke with me.

Somebody pulling in the yoke with me. A yoke is usually a wooden instrument. It goes over two animals. They make single yokes and a double yoke.

And they got these yokes and they pull. And the idea is that I would pull with that missionary. I would be in the work. Paul writes and he says, This guy's really with me in the ministry. And then he says further into that, He said labored with me.

[5 : 50] Did you read that in that verse? Labored with me. He's in the gospel laboring with me. And then it says other of my fellow laborers, guys that got in the ministry with me. And you're here in America.

And the truth is we live in the most wonderful country in the world. I have visited quite a few countries. None of them are like America. But, you know, we do have a corner on traffic.

I can give you that. But at least our traffic stays in the lanes. I mean, you could be in a country somewhere and they got four lanes of traffic. They turn it into eight and ten lanes. When I first came back, it was pretty hard for me to drive because when there was traffic and backing up, I wanted to get on the sidewalk and go around them because I've done that many times.

You know, and so I got here and Betty said, this is America. Stop. Stay in your lane. And, you know, I can remember coming to Vision to our church. I was coming down. I was coming down Mullinax and there's a road that cuts in where the cherries live off that road.

And everybody was letting the guy in. It'd be like one car and in one car. And everybody was being real nice. It came my turn. I'd let him in. Like in a pool. We don't let nobody in, buddy. You want in, you fight your way in.

[7 : 00] And I finally got saved and I started letting him in. And, but it takes a day. It's different. So let me give you some ideas if I can.

They need an advocate in our church. David Belasquez and his family will arrive in just a few weeks and they'll be here in America. They're looking at renting a house. They literally have no connections in America.

David's parents live, David's parents live in Spain. David's mother-in-law and father-in-law live in Atiquipa, Peru. And they have nobody here in America.

Our church is all they have. And he married a beautiful Peruvian girl, Fabiana, out of our ministry there. They'll be coming here. They're looking for where they're going to rent. They're looking for getting a house set up.

Everything is going to be a strain for them. They'll only be here for six months before they rush back to, before they rush back. Fabiana is not an American citizen. She's married to one. She will get her citizenship.

[7 : 55] She's in the process of working towards that. I'm not as exciting as they are. But so they've got to keep both sets of paperwork going so they stay in Spain.

So they need help. Somebody that would care about them. Somebody that would stay in touch with them. Somebody that would let them know what's happening here at Vision. I always want to know what's going on back at the home church. Who joined the church?

Who got saved? Who made a decision? That Glenn South guy came down and stole one of our girls. I wanted to know that stuff. I wanted an insider. So I would like to challenge you to do that.

Somebody would help them when they're leaving and returning. Who picks them up at the airport? Now, the church staff does all that. I mean, we do. But it turns into this. They love us.

They don't love everybody. They know we love them. They don't know you love them. I wish they could know you love them. When Jason Holt came in, you guys were great. Man, you worked long hours. You set up his house.

[8 : 52] You did about the best job I know of doing. I know that Pepperdines are really helping the Tulsans. But so many of our others don't have that yet. So I'd like to ask you to pray about that. Let me just tell you a few things that I would ask you to do real quickly.

A Yoke fellow would care about the missionary. Strive to meet their spiritual, physical, and emotional needs. See how much they can help them in everything.

Be creative. Figure out what I could do to be a help. Now, when a soldier comes back, have you ever been at the Atlanta airport? I go in and out of there all the time. When a soldier comes back, and they're coming up that long set of escalators, look like the escalator to heaven, because it's like four stories of escalator.

You're riding it up. And just as you crest the top of it, if you're dressed in an American uniform, a military uniform, they clap for you. They come out. They give you gifts. They say, well, thank you for your service.

You do know that when the missionaries come home, nobody will say that. Nobody will say that. No one will be there to say thank you for all you did. No one will be there to say great job.

[9 : 59] No one will be clapping. They're lucky if they can get anybody to show up at the airport. I'd like to change that. I'd like vision not to let that happen. So they need a contact person. Now, several of our families already have Yolk Fellows, and I hope you're really working at it.

But, like, to be honest, I can't remember everybody. I can't remember. I need to make sure and mention Kelly's brother. He hadn't had surgery yet, by the way. Just got a text. We're still waiting to have the surgery. So there's Kelly's brother.

Will I remember to pray for him? Will I remember to tell you about him? With 21 missionary families plus, I take personal care of about 30 more. Who's going to remember them?

Who's going to say this missionary family needs our prayer? This missionary family, we ought to remember this. They need a contact person here at the church. They need an advocate. They need somebody that says, hey, can I get this in the bulletin?

I need you to pray for my guy. You know, like the Littlefields. Chuck and Chuck Littlefield and Jonathan Clapp had Aim for Columbia. That's a good example.

[11 : 00] That was a family standing up and saying, we care about that missionary. We're going to have to raise money. It was a good thing, even an outreach for our church, but it was also a way to say to a missionary, we care about you.

A missionary that could easily be swept under the carpet, easily be forgotten because there are so many. I would like to ask you to consider doing that. I would like to ask you to consider when they come, you know they want to tell what's going on.

Do you realize that as a missionary comes home, God's been doing good stuff? He really wants to be able to say, let me tell you what God did. But he doesn't have much of a chance to do that.

First off, everybody wants to tell him what's going on in America. Have you seen the latest fashion? Have you seen the latest thing that came out? Here's the latest toy. Let's talk about that. Well, he's not really into that. If he was, he wouldn't be where he is.

And so when he comes back, he wants to say to you, boy, God's been doing big stuff. God's been doing really big stuff. Let me tell you, these people got saved. These lives got changed. These people got baptized. Let me show you some pictures.

[11 : 56] Let me tell you what's going on. Wouldn't it be neat if somebody in our church said, I got that missionary family and I'm going to have a meeting over at my house. We have hot dogs and hamburgers. I want to bring over other church members.

We're going to pray for them. We're going to give them some gifts. Wouldn't it be neat if somebody went to their house before they got here, helped them get their house set up, put some food in their house, and took care of everything. So when they walked in the door, it was like, man, I really got family that love me and care about me.

These are our servants. These are our heroes. These are the guys taking the gospel around the world for us. And they're members of our church. They tithe here. They give here.

They work here. They ought to be taken care of. Somebody who would communicate with them. They don't have anybody really that they can say, this is what I'm really feeling. I've told you the story.

The idea of a yoke fellow really came from a man that worked with me named Paul Forsythe. He's in heaven. But Brother Paul came down in 1989. Brother Paul's family was going through some major trouble.

[12 : 55] I did not know him. He supported me. But you don't know pastors that support you. You can say, well, they're my supporter and they're my friend and I know them, but you don't. I mean, I drove in. I preached.

They voted. They took me on. I drove out. I mean, I knew his name. I knew where his church was located. Claxton, Georgia. Fruitcake capital of the world. I happen to know Brother Paul just a little bit better because he was friends with Wayne Coffield, later my pastor and my friend.

And so I'd met Brother Paul. But Brother Paul comes in 1989 and when he comes to Adequipa, he wants to talk every night. I don't want to. I'm tired. I'm ready to go to bed. So everybody goes to bed.

And Brother Paul kept me up every night to 3 and 4 o'clock in the morning. And I mean, when he would finally tell me, he said, well, buddy, we better get some sleep. I'd say, whatever you want to do, brother. I'm sitting with you. Yeah, really.

I really would like to. And so we go up to bed and by 7 o'clock I'm back downstairs ready to go again. And he did that every day. And I just thought, this guy sure is lonely. He likes to talk a lot, but he was hurting. But when he went home, he never forgot me.

[13 : 56] And for the next nine years, nothing happened in my life he didn't know about. He called me on the phone at least once a month when it was costing \$3 to \$4 a minute to talk to me.

And he usually talked 30 minutes to an hour depending on what I needed. He would always call up. He'd say, hey, buddy. Never tell me who he was. He'd just say, hey, buddy. How you doing? I would say, fine, Brother Paul.

How are you? And he'd talk. He came every year. He brought people down. He always brought offerings. He would get off the airplane and he would pull out money and he'd say, check it out. I brought a wad of cash.

He said, we're going to have some fun while I'm here. And I said, what are we going to do? He said, I don't know. Let's just look for a party to happen. And so we'd be riding down. He'd say, look at that guy. Mr. He's got good tread on his tires.

I said, no, sir. He said, what did it cost to fix that? I said, oh, about \$100 a tire. He goes, take it. Let's get him some tires. Just tell him we got him some tires. We'd drive on down the road, pull up somebody. He'd say, that lady don't have a microwave.

[14 : 51] I said, no, sir. He said, what did that cost? Oh, about \$300 or \$400. Peel it off. And I'd sit and prove you. Go buy him a bomb. He had a blast. He bought property for churches. He bought things for my wife.

He bought things for my kids. He was always doing stuff. He was a yoke fellow to me. It wasn't the money. It was the friendship. By the way, when he got ready to die, he had a brain tumor.

And they took it out. He called me on the phone. And he said, hey, buddy. And I said, hey, Brother Paul. He said, I want to know if you'd preach my funeral. I said, sure. We're going to do that anytime soon?

And he said, yeah, we are. And I said, I'm kidding, Brother Paul. And I know you've got to be kidding. He said, no, I've got a brain tumor. I'm not kidding.

And you don't have to preach my funeral, but I'd like you to. You're my pick. If you don't want to, Pastor Raymond Hancock, famous pastor in Georgia, he'll preach it for me. I said, no, no.

[15 : 47] If you want me to preach your funeral, I'll be more than honored to preach your funeral. Well, they got the cancer out, but they didn't get it all. It was coming back. He was going to die. And he called. He said, hey, buddy, I'm going to make a trip down to Peru.

His wife called me and said, you tell him no. I said, Miss Emily, I ain't telling him no. Nobody tells Brother Paul no. And so I said, sure, buddy. Come on down. Brother Paul flew down, hurting, dying.

Weeks later, he'll be dead. Or months later, he'll be dead. He comes down to Peru. And I tried to help him. I grabbed his arm. He said, get your arm off me. I don't need anybody's help. Okay.

Some Peruvian guys in my ministry, they grabbed his arm. He's like, fine, you guys can take care of me. Loved those Peruvians, cried with those Peruvians. And I came back and I preached his funeral. But he was my connection to America.

America, he was the most interested. My daughter got raped. You know who called, don't you? Brother Paul, hey, buddy, do I need to kill some people?

[16 : 45] Can we hire some of them to hit squads? If you know who they are, we will take them out. I said, Brother Paul, don't even cut up like it. He said, I'm not cutting up. I said, well, Brother Paul, we can't even talk like that. They beat us up and threw us off the Bible college land.

He called and he says, what do you need? How much money do you need? I said, well, a bunch of thugs beat us up. He said, how much does it cost to hire thugs? I'll hire some. He said, why don't we hire thugs to beat up their thugs?

And I said, Brother Paul, you know, Christians don't do that. He said, right now we're not talking Christian. We're talking getting even. And he's my buddy. He's my buddy. Wouldn't it be good if our missionaries had somebody like that?

Wouldn't it be good if they had somebody like that? And if you're not already a Yoke fellow, I wish you'd let me know. By the way, David and Fabiana need a Yoke fellow. Now, hey, I'm going to help take care of them. Betty and I are going to help take care of them.

But wouldn't it be nice if they came to Vision and said, man, that church really cares about us? It would make a difference. I'd like to ask you to help me with that. Father in heaven, I thank you for the chance to be with your people.

[17 : 39] I thank you for the chance for this evening to have the Gower and Sender Coalition. I pray you'd help us to do more for world evangelism than we've ever done before. I thank you for all the missionaries you're calling out. And I just pray your name.

It would be honored and glorified. In Jesus' name, amen. This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfredo, 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.