

Guy Roberts Preaching

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: 01 August 2013

[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. Take your Bibles and turn to Acts chapter 20. Acts chapter number 20.

And it is my privilege to be here. Privilege to be here. I mean that. So, 20th chapter of Acts. And I'll tell you what I'm going to do. I'm going to come right down here with you if that's alright.

I'm going to get close. Put my water right there. This won't bother the sound system, will it be here? No, no? Okay. Just appreciate the privilege.

I want to say something really quick. The guys that are with me. Clinton Holden is sitting right here. Clinton works with our teams. Ron Taylor is sitting right beside him. He works with our singles ministry.

And then we've got two guys here. Tanner Gibson has just gotten back from Fiji and Africa. He and his family has been members of the church now for about eight or nine months.

[0 : 58] And really involved in missions. Really appreciate Tanner. And then we have right here Brother Aaron Hyde. He's part of our team group. And he was here with us in Atlanta when we were here working with Brother Bo and some others in the area.

So, I appreciate the opportunity to be here. Let me say this really quick before I get started. I appreciate what your pastor is doing and this church is doing and the mission. Because we've had the privilege as a church and as a pastor to meet some of your missionaries.

And I just want you to know something from 30 years of being in pastoral work. Not all missionaries are cookie cutters. And I'm not saying you're putting out cookie cutters. But I'm just saying this.

They're well prepared. And they say things right. And they do things right. And I just wanted this pastor to know how much we appreciate having missionaries in.

We've had several of your families with us. Brother Togby and his wife and family will be with us on the 11th. And we'll have several others during mission month. Emphasis. But I appreciate what you guys are doing with the church and with the mission here.

[2 : 00] It's a blessing to us. Eventually we're going to be at one verse of Scripture. And I forgot my real glasses so I'll have to be taking these off and on. But we're going to look at chapter 20, book of Acts, verse 24.

And we'll eventually get to this thought. Just four questions I want to ask all of us tonight. Just four simple questions.

The Apostle Paul is in Miletus. And he has sent to Ephesus for the church leaders to come down. And he kind of wants to just have a little chit-chat with them. And he's going to share some things on a more personal level.

And then he'll share some things on a more pastoral level. Three areas he talks about. And you can see them if you go back up to verse number 19. He talks about it's a pattern of ministry.

One is just how he served the Lord in the 19th verse. And it mentions, it says, In humility of mind, many tears and temptations. In other words, there were trials.

[3 : 00] So he's just sharing things with them about how he served God when he was with them. In other words, they could look at what he did and know how he served the Lord. It wasn't just talk.

He had lived it. He had walked it. The fact that there's tears we see at the end of the text. They had to literally pull these people off of Paul's necks. He was not a CEO of a church that sat in an office.

He got involved with his people. So Paul was someone that served the people with humility. The second thing he talks to him about is in preaching. He talks about that in verse 20.

A little bit in verse 21. He preached. Simple message. Simple message. Repentance and faith. If you study the whole book of Acts, one third of the book of Acts is preaching.

It's not like this miracle after miracle after miracle. It's about ten. And some of them are grouped together. But it's preaching. And the preaching is super simple. It's death, burial, resurrection, and a coming king.

[4 : 01] And you better get ready. So it's just great, simple preaching. The gospel message. But the last thing is what I want to talk about. And this is living. He just shared some things about his serving.

About his preaching. And then about his living. And it kind of comes from a statement that he makes up in verse number 23. Now I don't know what's been happening up to this point.

I know what happens after this point. When you get into chapter 21. And the 20th and 21st and 22nd chapter of the book of Acts. You need to read and study. It's a great story. But when he gets to Tyre.

There's some people that I don't even think he's met. He finds disciples in Tyre. And when he finds them and they begin to talk. They are telling him. You do not need to go to Jerusalem. The Holy Ghost, he says in that 23rd verse.

Has shown me things not fully aware of what I'm going to face. But it doesn't sound promising. I'm going to end up getting hurt. There's a possibility, real potential of affliction.

[5 : 03] I might even be in bonds, in prison. So he's already heard some things from the Holy Spirit. In chapter 21 from people that maybe have heard of him. But apparently they feel like you don't need to go to Jerusalem.

If you go a little further in Acts chapter 21. Agabus, the prophet, even tells him. Takes off his little girdle thing. And he ties up his hand. He says, listen, when you go to Jerusalem. I promise you, the Spirit of God is telling me to tell you.

You will be in prison. So all of these things are hitting him. Prior to this statement in Acts chapter 20. And following his statement in Acts chapter 20.

And if there's one thing. And this is not really the three thoughts I want to share with you tonight. But if there's one thing about the Apostle Paul I like. He had a plan. He had a plan. If you read ten commentaries on the book of Acts.

Two or three of them are going to tell you that Paul made a mistake. In Acts 21 and 22. That he made a mistake. He should not have went to Jerusalem. And when he got to Jerusalem. He surely should not have done this stupid, weird thing that James asked him to do.

[6 : 10] But can I tell you this? Whether Paul did the right thing or the wrong thing. He did something. Because he had a plan. There's too many Christians that have no plan.

They sat around on church pews. They sat in Bible colleges. And they sat in a waiting line like a plane looking for a place to take off. Because they're afraid they're going to mess up. I'd rather go down the wrong road than never travel no road.

Paul had a plan. Now I kind of tend to agree that Paul should have went to Jerusalem. And I think he did the right thing. I know at least he was motivated. To go to Jerusalem. He felt like from the Spirit of God.

But I want us to look in verse 24. When do you normally let out? Because I know you've got children upstairs and stuff. 8 o'clock. Good deal. Okay. Verse 24.

And I want you to just notice how he references bonds and afflictions. Abide or awake me. But none of these things.

[7 : 13] I mean even the terminology blows my mind. I mean most Christians. If there was the potential of us being thrown in prison for something for the cause of Christ.

We would not refer to them in such ambiguous terms. Those things. We would highlight them. I have been in jail for the cause of Christ.

And we'd brag about it. Or. We would pitch a pity party. You wouldn't believe what I've been through in the last six months.

It's just been awful. He's referring to the potential of suffering. To the potential of imprisonment. To the potential impossibility of trials.

Just ambitiously. Those things. And you can follow that same train of thought. Read Romans 8.18 sometime.

[8 : 13] And see how he refers to the sufferings of this life. In comparison. To the glories of the next life. In other words.

He just looked at suffering in a whole different light than we do. Most of us don't do any suffering. And I'll be the first one to stand in line to the top of the list. I've never suffered any. My life's been really comfortable.

But the first question. This is literally. The 24th verse. Is like a testimony. From the apostle Paul. And it's all interconnected.

And I'm going to do the best I can over the next few minutes. To kind of show you. The contrast. And the connections. Of these four statements. That I'm going to kind of pose questions to you.

Here's the four things I'm going to ask you. If you're writing stuff down or whatever. One. What moves you? What moves you?

[9 : 12] The word there is motivated or driven. What motivates you? What drives you? Paul's using it in this text in a negative way.

He's simply saying that stuff. That the spirit of God has been telling me. That potentially. Possibly. Awaits me. Those things. Do not.

Motivate me. I am moved. By something completely. Beyond. That stuff. Those things are figured in.

To should I. Or shouldn't I. Go to Jerusalem. In fact. He understood. That when Jesus called him. To follow him. It was a call. To. Suffer.

That's part of it. That's the natural mix of things. The book of Acts is a testimony. If you're doing something. For the cause of the kingdom. You're going to ruffle somebody's feather somewhere.

[10 : 13] So he's just simply saying. That stuff doesn't move me. That I might suffer. I've already suffered. I mean. Just one illustration.

That he was moved. And motivated. By something different. Than most of us. He gets beat up. And some commentators say dead.

Some commentators say. Are you with an inch of death? Some say the word rose there. Is the Greek word for resurrection? I don't know. Let's just be honest. If you're in a place in your life.

And you're preaching Jesus. And people are getting really antagonistic towards your preaching. And they beat you to death. Or with an inch of death.

Would you think about going back into that town again? He did. You know why? Because he was moved by something that I don't understand. He went right back into that town.

[11 : 16] With the same message. With the same gospel. With the same preaching. With the same potential. Of the same results.

What moves you? What motivates you? What drives you?

Let me show an illustration. Sports motivated me when I was a kid. My team's the Yankees. The Yankees because my dad was a Yankee fan.

I knew everything about the Yankees. Everything. Batting averages. Eras. Hits. Home runs.

Knew their names. That's motivated. Motivated. I love deer hunting. I didn't care how many times I had to go in the woods in August.

[12 : 17] And get scratched up by briars. To find the scrape. Of the deer. It didn't make any difference. How early in the morning I had to get up and take my gear into the woods.

And climb the tree. For reason to death. Waiting on Bambi to show up. Hope a little bigger than Bambi anyway. What motivates you to do what you do for the cause of the kingdom?

We know what motivates us to do for our team. We know what motivates us to do for a car or for business. We know what motivates us to climb some corporate ladder.

But what motivates you for the kingdom of Christ? What moves you? What passion is it? Not just in the attendance of a church service.

But out there in the world. In your daily routine. What moves and motivates and drives you to reach your world? The gospel. Now he's using it in a negative way.

[13 : 19] He's saying none of those things that maybe await me in Jerusalem are going to change or deter what I feel like God wants me to do.

But what did motivate him? What were the positive things? I'm just going to give you three. Because I'm going to go quick. Three things that motivated him. I hope you're not looking for something profound.

Because this ain't profound. Number one. Jesus. Jesus motivated him. Met him on the road to Damascus.

Used to believe with all of his motivation and all of his anger and all of his bitterness that he was an imposter. And he found out he was the king of kings.

Now he's a follower. You know what motivates him? Jesus. Not numbers. Not accolades. Not size. Not conversions. Not professions. Jesus motivated him.

[14 : 21] What motivates you? I can tell you what discourages me. People not showing up on Wednesday night. Or people not showing back up on Sunday night.

Or having a handful of soul winning efforts. But why are we there? Better be Jesus. Get your eyes focused on the cross.

Get your eyes focused on what he did for you. Then live your life motivated and driven to please and honor him.

That's what motivated him. That's what moved him. Jesus. Number two. The church. Can I tell you something that has been going on for at least a year and a half?

Maybe two years? Ephesus is here. You've got a map. This is west and that's east. Ephesus is here.

[15 : 26] Jerusalem is over here. And the Macedonian churches are over here. He's been in Ephesus for about three years.

You know one of the things that blows my mind? For two years, I know. I'll get back to this in a minute. For two years, he met in the school of Tyrannus. Historians tell us, people, hold up smarter than me, that the school was used in early morning and late evenings because they had no air conditioning.

So they would teach in the morning and at night. And so they gave it to Paul in the middle of the day when nobody wants to come. For two years, probably seven days a week, Paul set up his little stuff in the school of Tyrannus.

And waited for people to come. And he talked. And if you go back to chapter 19 and read, through those efforts of two years, the whole area heard the gospel of Jesus Christ.

What would drive a man to meet in a building at the worst possible time of the day and wonder who would come?

[16 : 42] A man that was driven to please Jesus. And he loved the church. Let me tell you something else he's been doing for about two years. Ephesus here.

Jerusalem here. Jewish church. Struggling financially. He's going to go this way. Not in a plane.

Not in a couple days. Months. Dangerous. Dangerous. Dangerous. Arterous. Trips. And he's raising money over here. In Acts chapter 20, he's got about five to seven guys with him from these Gentile churches.

And he's bringing an offering to the Jerusalem church. What moved him? How many of you would travel thousands of miles in a ship just to bring a love offering to a sister church?

What moved Paul? What moved Paul? Was he loved the church. I'm not talking about vision. I'm not talking about concord.

[17 : 46] I'm talking about the church. How much do you love the church? That I'll go any length, any direction, sleep anywhere, have any plan, do whatever for the cause of the church.

That drove Paul. I love the church. And I'm doing what I do for the church. For Jesus. For the church.

For the gospel. That drove him. In fact, it tells us in the latter part of the verse. It says in verse 24, like the end result of his ministry, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

I mean, the gospel is the most amazing thing that I've ever experienced. I'm on the road to Damascus. I believe Jesus is an imposter.

I've locked people up and sent them to prison. Maybe they're deaths. I think they've been the blind following the blind. And then I meet him. And I get gloriously saved.

[18 : 55] I find out he is the Messiah. And all that I have done by the gospel of the marvelous grace of the King of Heaven. He wants me to be his son and his servant.

And saves me. Calls me to ministry. What moved the apostle Paul? The gospel. More and more.

I know these guys have heard until they're tired of hearing it from the book of Acts. More and more, I think we need to simplify our efforts. In most cities or towns, big, small, whatever.

And just give them the gospel of Jesus Christ. Consistently, consistently, consistently sharing the gospel of Jesus.

What moved Paul? What moves you? Secondly, what's dear to you? Look at that verse.

[19 : 56] Well, I'm glad it's up there. I can get rid of my glasses. Look at it. Neither. Now that connects it to the first one. Neither count. The word count means to put at the disposal of. Neither do I put at the disposal my life unto myself. I do not hold my life.

I do not control my life. Because my life is not dear to me. Dear means treasured or precious or valued.

Man, we all like our lives. We all like who we are. However, I'm my favorite person. In every argument, I always fall out on my side. I promise you.

So we know what it's like to be in love with ourselves and be selfish. But we are clueless to this. Now, it's connected, but it's a contrast.

[20 : 59] Because notice the first two things connected to the third thing. We'll get to the third thing. But look at it. But none of these things move me. Neither. Not only am I not moved or deterred from doing what I feel like God wants me to do.

Because of potential suffering. And here's the reason it doesn't move me. Because my body being beaten doesn't bother me.

If I have to suffer, it doesn't bother me. If it costs me, it doesn't bother me. If it's sacrificial, it doesn't bother me.

Because my life is not on the top shelf. Look at it. These two things work together so that I might finish my course with joy in the ministry.

My life is not going to get in the way of the ministry and the course that God has for my life.

[22 : 05] And we'll talk about those two things in a minute. But secondly, what's dear to you? What's really valued and precious to you?

Again, he's using it in a negative way. He's saying my life is not dear, precious, valued, treasured to me. I'll be honest with you.

And I'm as guilty and I'm in the same transformation process that everybody here tonight is in the building. And that is becoming more like Christ. And one of the greatest ways you can ever be more like Christ is to be selfless.

Selfish comes with the package. Selfless comes with the transforming power of the gospel, the grace of God. Paul said, my life is not number one.

His course, his ministry, his life for me, that is number one. What's dear to you? Another simple illustration.

[23 : 10] My grandfather, I gave to his son, my dad, a double barrel shotgun, L.C. Smith. If you know anything about shotguns, they don't make L.C. Smith.

It hasn't made them for a long time. It's a very valuable gun. I think like three, four thousand dollars. So it's been passed down. And so I have it.

It's so valued and treasured and precious that it still has the oil markings where the triggers are. I just looked at the other days, I was moving some things in my office at the house and I unraveled the paper or the cloth around it and those markings are still there.

I've greased it up a little bit with oil, put them back, you know, like in a little cocoon. Because it's precious. It was my grandfather's, it was my father's, and now it's mine.

But we know what things are that are dear to us. But how many of us tonight are willing to put our life, our ambitions, our dreams, our goals, our focus on some other level and put what He wants us to do above it?

[24 : 32] What's dear to you? What moves you? Secondly, what's dear to you? Thirdly, and I mentioned this a little bit earlier, what's your course?

What's your course? It uses two things in the text. And I can't say this dogmatically, so I mean this is just geology or whatever. It says I might finish my course, but I mean He does differentiate.

With joy, I don't want to end up bitter. And He does that. He ends up in jail. He ends up getting His head cut off. But He's one happy man in 2 Timothy 4.

Man, He's not bitter. He's happy as He can be. He's not mad at nobody. He's got no axe to grind. And He's getting ready to die. Nobody, all of His preacher buddies don't even come to His aid.

No man stood with me. But Paul finished his course with joy and the ministry. Now here's the way I differentiate. It might be wrong. That's close, maybe.

[25 : 37] The course is the overall life course that he's been put on. In other words, he has one from God. Within the confines of his entire life course is his ministry.

That's the specifics of what God's called him to do. The thing I want you to understand tonight is everybody in the building has a course. You might not be on it. You might be evading it.

You might ignore it. You might be doing something in opposition to what God wants you to do. But I promise you, God has something He wants you to do. And can I just remind anybody here tonight that just don't think you're worthy to serve the Lord?

Paul, before he got saved, had Christians put in jail and it cost them their lives. So get over your past and realize that the grace of God is really deep.

In fact, it's fathomless. It's inexplicable. In fact, these Ephesians that he's talking to, I mean, they were a rough crowd. And he told them in his book, he said, listen, you guys got the same thing the Jews got.

[26 : 42] The promises that God made to the Jews, He made to you. Because of grace. So God has a course for you. God has a path for you. But my question is, what is your plan? What is your course?

I told both my girls this. My oldest daughter, Charity, is a nurse. And my youngest girl, Brittany, is a beautician, cosmetologist, whatever the proper word is now. She fixes hair.

That's the way I would say it. So, what do you expect? I told both of them, I said, listen, if you work in the ER, your whole life, and all you do is fix people when they have physical stuff going on in their lives.

And I told my little redhead, I said, darling, if all you do is make other women beautiful when they leave your shop, if that's it, it's a useless life.

If you don't try to reach that lady in your chair with the gospel, then you're missing out on your real course in ministry. Because life is not about fixing air!

[27 : 53] Life is not about fixing broken limbs. It's about fixing broken hearts with the gospel of Christ. So pour your life into some course that reaches your world with the gospel.

Turn your home into a Bible study. Turn your job into a mission field. Turn your school into outreach. Don't wait for Tuesdays. Don't wait for Saturdays. Use the day you're living to reach your world with the gospel.

You've got a course. Live it. Reach it. And finish it one day satisfied. Can I tell you some stuff Paul didn't have?

If I'll do it. Can I tell you some stuff Paul didn't have? Now I'm not against any of this stuff. I'm just going to tell you some stuff Paul didn't have. He didn't have a house.

As far as I know. He didn't have a house. Didn't seem to be too bothered by it. I don't know what his retirement program was. I'm not saying don't have one. I'm just saying Paul, when he gets up to 2 Timothy 4, I don't know what he had.

[29 : 00] I'll tell you what he did have. He had joy. He had a life behind him. Of ministry. Acts 21-22.

Maybe he did make a mistake and go to Jerusalem. Maybe he did. But he had a plan. He'd been taking up an offering for two years for the believers in Jerusalem. And he was willing to go all those miles to get it and carry it to him and try to mend some of the teaching between the Gentile church and the Jewish church.

Hey, study Acts 21 sometime. See if it mentions the offering. See if James ever says thanks, Brother Paul, for the money.

You just read the text. Here's the man that traveled thousands of miles by boat to raise an offering for the impoverished Jewish church and try to mend the tensions between them not one time.

That we have in the text. Maybe they did. They ever say thanks for the offering. Appreciate the money. But here's what we'd like for you. We've got these four guys took a vow.

[30 : 10] We'd like for you to... It's an interesting story. Paul was moved to serve his king. Paul did not hold his life dear.

dear. He was not the best thing that ever happened to him. Paul was not the best thing since sliced bread. Jesus was.

And the gospel was. And if he suffered, he suffered. And if he went to Jerusalem and he suffered, he didn't see it as a deterrent. He saw it as part of the process.

Just let the suffering come. Because he did not hold his life dear. Why? Because he wanted to finish his ministry. That meant more to him than his life.

That meant more to him than the suffering. And then the last thing. Which I have received of the Lord Jesus and He did personally. Verbally.

[31 : 14] So have you. this to testify the gospel of the grace of God. Last thing.

What moves you? What do you hold dear? What's your course? What's your plan of attack? To do what God's called you to do.

Number four and lastly. What's your testimony? You know what the testimony is? I was once a sinner.

And God came to where I was. And He showed me the insurmountable amount of bad news. That I was lost.

The Word of God backed it up. And there wasn't one thing I could do to change anything. But then He told me the good news. His Son came in my place.

[32 : 17] And what I couldn't do He did. And the law I couldn't keep He kept. The God that could not be satisfied with America's works of my flesh was completely satisfied in the work of the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords.

That's the best news I've ever heard. So what's your testimony? I've got a great church in Pickens County named Concord. I've got a great Savior.

And His name's Jesus. And He saved me! And He called me! And He doesn't need me but He wants me to be used for His glory.

That's my testimony. What's your testimony? That was Paul's. 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.

[33 : 24] Thanks.