

PAUL, THE PREACHER

ACTS 20:26-27 • TV178B

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Acts 20:26-27

*“Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.
For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.”*

I believe that you are going to find the message today to be interesting. I hope you will listen to the whole program and the entire message.

I am going to be speaking from the book of **Acts chapter 20**. Here is my subject: I am going to talk about preachers and preaching. My subject is: **“PAUL, THE PREACHER.”**

The apostle Paul was primarily a preacher. Someone said he wrote 13 books in the New Testament. He organized churches and gave advice and counsel. But Paul was primarily a preacher. He said, *“God sent me not to baptize.”*

He was not speaking against baptism; he knew that baptism was a confession of faith in Christ. He baptized some people, but, he said; *“That’s not why God sent me; he didn’t send me to baptize, (to organize), but he sent me to preach the Gospel.* That is what God sent me to do, to preach the Gospel.”

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On another occasion he said, *“Woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel.”* In other words, what I am saying is this; Paul was not a promoter; Paul was not an entertainer; Paul was not a politician; Paul was a preacher of the Gospel of the free grace of God.

That is what he boasted in; that is what he said God sent him to do and that is what he declared that he was going to do until he left this world, preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

My friend, this is our desperate need today. The church doesn't need more buildings. The church doesn't need more singing. It doesn't need more ball teams and gymnasiums. The church doesn't even need you.

The church needs, and the great need of our day is for some men, who are called of God, sent of God, and who are separated unto the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. That's our crying and immediate need in this day.

We have entertainers; we have executives, we have promoters and we have everything in the world in the pulpit except some preachers of the Gospel of the grace of God, men who have been sent of God to declare the good tidings of great joy, the glad tidings of God's mercy to sinners.

Let me ask you three questions; I want you to think about three questions:

First of all: How do we preach? How should a man preach (humanly speaking)?

A man has to be called of God and sent of God and given his message from God. I am asking, how should we preach? May I answer that for you?

I believe a man, (humanly speaking), must preach first of all, out of his heart or out of his experience or out of his own knowledge. You can't preach Christ if you have never met Christ. You can't declare the glory of Christ if you have never seen the glory of Christ.

This is what John said three times in the book of **1 John Chapter 1**: He said; *“That which we have seen and that which we have heard and that which our hands of handled, declare we unto you. I am telling you what I have seen and heard.”*

Peter said the same thing when they told Peter and the other apostles to shut their mouths and don't preach anymore. They said, *“Why, we have to preach what we have seen and heard.”* I know that our preaching comes from the Bible, but it has to come from experience.

Secondly: We not only preach from experience and from the heart, but we must preach with sincerity.

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God help us; if we are going to play games, then let's play something else. Let's play Russian roulette and not leave any empty chambers. It would be better off than playing with the Gospel.

You would be better off than playing with the preaching of the Word of God, compromising the Scriptures. I would rather play Russian roulette with a fully loaded gun than to compromise the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Let's preach with sincerity and let's preach with plainness of speech. Do you know what the apostle Paul said? He said, "*I didn't come to you with enticing words of man's wisdom. I came to you preaching in the demonstration and power of the Holy Spirit that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.*" Now, that is how we preach.

Well, what do we preach? Let me tell you, my friend; "*we preach Christ and him crucified.*" That's our message. God sent us to preach Christ. Paul said, "*I'm determined, to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified.*" That is our message. We preach the Gospel of the glory of God. Christ is our message.

Thirdly: Why do we preach?

This is what I want to get to, why do we preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ? Why am I here right now? I will give you three answers to that question:

First of all: We preach for the glory of God.

The apostle tells us that whatever we do, in word or deed, to do it for the glory of God Almighty. That must be our motivation. I will tell you this; why a man preaches will determine what he preaches.

If he is preaching to please men he will compromise the Gospel. If he is preaching to pack a church, he will preach entertainment and what men want to hear. If he is preaching to get a promotion or to get a bigger salary then he will compromise the Gospel.

But, if he is preaching for the glory of God, he is not interested in what he gains, what men give, or who comes. He is interested in one thing, glorifying God Almighty!

Now, that is our first reason for preaching and it better be our first reason, because why a man preaches will determine what he preaches. If he is preaching to please men he will take the edge off. He will take the offense out of the Gospel. He will cut the corners and he will compromise.

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But, if he is preaching for the glory of God, fearlessly, boldly, and courageously, determined to glorify God, whatever the cost, if it costs him his life, then he will tell you the truth because he has nothing to gain on this earth. He cares not what men think or what men do. He cares for one thing, what God thinks, but we preach for the glory of God.

Secondly: Why do we preach? We preach for the conversion of his elect, his sheep.

Paul talked about his sufferings and trials; he had been beaten and shipwrecked and stoned and scourged and all of these things. He had been put in prison, but then he said in **2 Timothy 2:10**, *“I suffer these things but I endure all things for the elect’s sake.”* “That’s why I am doing them; I am doing them gladly. I am doing them patiently; I endure them for the glory of God but I endure them for the elect’s sake that they may hear the Gospel; that they may learn of Christ, that they may obtain the salvation which is in Jesus Christ with eternal glory.”

Thirdly: We preach to fulfill our responsibility (our responsibility to all men).

When Paul left the church at Ephesus (I am going to read in **Acts 20** in just a minute); he said, *“I am free from the blood of all men. I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. I am free from the blood of all men. I have preached unto you the all (whole) counsel of God.”*

“I have kept back nothing (through fear of men, through seeking applause or favor through covetousness). *I have kept back nothing;* (I have hid nothing. I have withheld nothing) *profitable unto you.”*

“Therefore, if you believe and are saved; I will rejoice. If you do not believe and perish under the judgment and wrath of God, you are fully responsible; I am not responsible. My hands are free, clean from your blood. I preach the truth to you.”

Now; you think about those three things; you write them down and you study them. If you are a preacher, you better give some attendance to them.

How do we preach? We preach out of experience, out of sincerity, and out of plainness of speech. What do we preach? We preach Christ; that is our message, the person and work of Christ.

Why do we preach? Not because it is a job, or that it pays well, or because the work is easy, nor because we are famous. We preach for the glory of God, for the salvation of his elect, and to deliver our hands and our soul from the blood of loss men.

When Paul was leaving his friends at Ephesus, Paul had preached to them and now he was going to Jerusalem. They knew and he knew that they would see his face no more.

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They knew and he knew that they would never again hear him preach. They knew and he knew that Paul was going to his death and this was his farewell message.

This was the last time that these people ever heard him preach. It is interesting to note the things that he calls to their attention, the things that he says in summing up his ministry, in summing up his work among them.

He doesn't stand around and brag about how many people he won to Jesus. He doesn't talk about how much bigger the church is now compared to when he came. He doesn't talk about the buildings, how they built a new educational building, or a new gym, or a new pastorium, or how they sanded the floors in the gymnasium and put a new coat of lacquer down. He doesn't talk about how they organized another Sunday school class.

I want you to listen to what Paul says; we are such foolish creatures. We are talking about things that aren't worth a hill of beans. We need to get back to the Word of God. Listen to what Paul says:

In **Acts 20:18**, the first thing he says is; "you won't see my face again; you won't hear me preach again. I will never see you again, but I want you to know this; while I have been with you, in **verse 18**; *I have served the Lord with humility of mind.*"

I want to know, why is humility of mind so difficult for us to learn and to practice? Now; I would like to know why. I would just like to know what any of us have to be proud of.

John Newton once said "A proud believer is the most inconsistent thing this side of hell." I believe that is so. "*Who maketh you to differ? What do you have that you didn't receive?*" Listen to the apostle Paul; "*I am what I am by the grace of God.*"

He said, "*I am not worthy to be an apostle. I was a blasphemer; I was injurious. I persecuted the church. What right do I have to claim worthiness in preaching the Gospel?*" He said, "*I am less than the least of all the saints.*"

Our Lord said, "*A man can receive nothing except it be given him from above.*" What on earth do we have to be proud of? I see these proud, cocky, and arrogant preachers. I think, under God, what right do they have to be proud? They ought to be the most humble men in the world, to be gifted, to be trusted, and to be sent forth to tell people the good news of Christ.

I have served the Lord with humility of mind. I will tell you this; we ought to be conscience of three things, every one of us who handle the Word of God.

First of all: We ought to be conscience of our own imperfections and sins. That is exactly right! We needn't act like "holier- than- thou" people, pious people, or Pharisees. Richard Baxter once said this; "I preach as one who may never preach again. I preach as

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a dying man to dying men.” Have we learned that, our own imperfections, and our own sin?

Another thing that we need to remember; our gifts are all borrowed; they are not ours; they are His who gave them to us:

Do we have the ability to sing? God gave it to us. Do we have the ability to preach? God gave it to us. Do we have eyes to see and ears to hear and legs to walk and hands to move? Do we have any senses at all? Do we have any understanding of the Scripture? God taught us.

If it weren't for his grace we would be babbling idiots. A lot of us are anyhow, you know. Without His grace we would be nothing. We are totally dependent on the Spirit of God.

It shouldn't be difficult for a man to serve the Lord with humility. The thing that ought to amaze every one of us is that God would even consider us, that God would even have us, and that God Almighty would even look with favor upon us.

It's amazing that God Almighty would even let us take a message to one of His children, that God would take such foolish, earthen-vessels of clay, and use them to give the water of life to a thirsty sinner. Thank God!

Paul said “We are nothing.” He uses that, he said; “*I am not one wit behind the chief apostle. I am nothing.*” That makes the chief apostle not much either.

Secondly: In **verse 20** he says this; “*I kept back nothing profitable unto you.*”

Now, my friend, watch this word “*profitable.*” “*All scripture is given by inspiration of God. All scripture is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.*”

It is not my place to censor the Word of God. A lot of preachers are doing that but it is not my place to censor the Word of God and feed people what I think is good for them or what I think they ought to hear, or what I think they ought to know.

Paul said, “*Timothy; preach the Word. All scripture is given by inspiration of God. All scripture is profitable for doctrine.*” Somebody said, “Don't preach election to sinners.” Is it in the Bible? Then preach it, preach all the Scripture.

People say, “We don't preach sovereignty to children.” Is it in the Bible? Then preach it to children. Who are you to censor the Word of God? Who are you to determine what a person ought to hear, should hear, or can hear? You are not God's private secretary; just preach his Word.

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If it is there in the Word, preach it. That is what Paul said; *“I have not shunned to declare unto you the all counsel of God. I have kept back nothing profitable unto you.”* Notice **verse 27**:

“I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.” He didn’t say that he preached all the counsel of God, no one knows all the counsel of God. He said, “I haven’t shunned doing it; what I know I preach; what God has shown me I preach. What God has revealed to me I preach, what God has written I preach. What I know I have preached; *“I have not shunned to declare unto you all counsel of God.”*”

None of us preach with the power we desire. None of us preach with compassion that we covet. None of us preach with the wisdom we need. I will tell you this; may every preacher be able to say; *“I have kept back nothing profitable unto you, for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.”*

I read the story one time of a preacher; it is a true story. The preacher’s name was Dr. Guise; he was pastor of a church over in England 200 years ago. He was a very learned man, a very educated man, a very pious man.

He pastored this church for 20, 30, or 35 years. It was so dead. People didn’t have anywhere else to go. They didn’t have televisions, movies, newspapers, radios or automobiles. Everybody went to church. They just sat and slept under Dr. Guise’s ministry.

He read his sermons and he was so deep and intellectual, dry, and theological. This is true; one Sunday morning he got up to preach and before he brought his written thesis he bowed his head to pray.

The old gentleman, while he was praying, went blind. When he raised his head and opened his eyes he couldn’t see. He stood there before his people and he said, “I am blind; I cannot see.” He couldn’t see his notes and he couldn’t see his manuscript.

He stood there and began to weep and tears ran down his cheek. For the last time he preached to them but he preached out of his heart. He told them about the grace of God and about the mercy of God for sinners and about the death of Christ.

You see, he couldn’t read that intellectual manuscript that he had prepared for the people. He just preached to them out of his heart, out of his experience, the Gospel of Jesus Christ for about 30 minutes. That congregation for the first time in years heard the Gospel with compassion and affection. The people wept and some people were saved that morning. They came to knowledge of the Gospel; they had never heard it before.

After he had finished preaching two of the deacons went to help him off the pulpit, one of these high pulpits. They were walking down the stairs and one deacon was heard to say

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to the other; “what a shame the old man didn’t go blind 20 years ago; maybe we would have been hearing some Gospel all this time.”

Will we have to go blind to stop reading dry, dead, intellectual manuscripts to people? Let us not fear men. Let us not seek possessions and applause. Let us have no desires for impressive statistics and results; let us preach the Gospel, the whole counsel of God.

I ask you, my friend; is God sovereign? Is He almighty? Is He omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient? Is He eternal? Preach it; that’s right just preach it!

Is man a fallen, depraved, creature? Did He die in the Garden of Eden? Did death and condemnation and judgment pass upon all men, both imputed and imparted to them?

Are they totally unable to think anything holy or do anything holy or please a holy God without help, without strength, without hope, or without God? Are you dependent on God’s sovereign mercy? Is that so; then preach it, then preach it!

Is salvation by grace alone, apart from works of any shape, form, or fashion? Paul said, “*If it is by grace it is not of works. If it is by works it is not of grace.*” Is it by grace alone; then preach it!

Don’t be afraid; don’t compromise, just preach it like it is; the grace of God that brings salvation hath appeared to all men: “*for by grace are you saved through faith, that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.*”

Is Jesus Christ God Almighty? I am not talking about just a Son of God; I mean God in human flesh. Then make it clear; preach it!

Is His blood effectual, is it sufficient? Did He pay for our sins? Does it redeem His people, all who believe? “Is our hope built on nothing less than Jesus’ blood and righteousness;” then preach it!

Is salvation a new birth? Is it a decision or is it a new birth? Is it regeneration or church membership? Is it regeneration or reformation? Well, if it is regeneration; preach it!

Is Christ the only Mediator? There is no purgatory; certainly not. Mary is no mediator; certainly not. No man in a religious office is infallible; certainly not; then preach it, then preach it!

Is Christ the only Mediator between God and men; then preach it! Is baptism by emersion our confession of faith in Jesus Christ? Is that the way the early churches baptized; then preach it!

Is the Lord’s Table actually the body and blood of Christ or is it representation, (symbolic)? Then preach it!

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Does the Holy Spirit dwell with all believers? *“If any man hath not the spirit of Christ he is none of his;”* then preach it!

Will Christ come again, literally, in the flesh, like He went away to receive His people? Then preach it!

Is there a resurrection of the dead? Is there a heaven by God’s grace and a hell under God’s judgment; then preach it!

We have no choice; this is God’s Word without fear, without compromise, without seeking to please men? *“If I please men, (Paul said emphatically, dogmatically), I am not the servant of Jesus Christ.”*

That’s what I choose to be, the servant, the bond-slave, of Jesus Christ. He’s my Idol, He’s my Refuge and He’s my God. He’s my *“wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.”* I believe God; I believe the Word of God. If one page of the Bible is not true I will throw it every bit away. It is God’s Word.

A man lay dying one time out in the mid-west. He had been a member of the church out there for many, many, years. His pastor went to see him. He knew he was dying. His pastor knew he was dying and his wife knew he was dying.

This was the last visit between these two old friends. This man had been his pastor for many years. Before he left the room and had prayer with the man he shook hands with him and he said to him as he looked him in the eye; both of them were broken hearted with tears in their eyes and there was a sad parting:

He looked him in the eye and he said; “Fred, are you saved, are you saved?” Do you know what that man replied? He said, “I am if you told me right, preacher because I believe what you preach.”

Oh what a heavy, humbling, responsibility, that is laid upon those who stand in the pulpit. God have mercy if they compromise, but He won’t. God have mercy if they are afraid of men, but He won’t.

God have mercy if they are seeking to keep their job, hold their house and family together. God have mercy, but He won’t. Hell’s not too hot for a man who will compromise the Gospel out of fear. That is just so!

Paul said, *“I have kept back nothing profitable unto you. I have not shunned to declare unto you the all counsel of God.”* **In verse 32**, he says; *“Brethren, I commend you to God and to the Word of his grace, to his word which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among them that are sanctified.”*

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Now, don't come to me, I can't save you. Don't come to the altar, the altar can't save you. Don't come to the baptismal waters, the water can't wash you. Well, where shall I go? Go to Christ. Christ said, "*Come unto me and I will give you rest. Look unto me and be ye saved.*"

Someone is getting between the sinner and Christ. We are shaking hands with men; we are kneeling before men. We are making our profession to men. We are making our decision at the hands of a man.

Somebody needs to seek the Lord, to look to Him. He's the Saviour. He alone can redeem. He alone can show mercy. He alone can make you whole. He alone can speak peace to your heart.

You have no peace? You haven't dealt with Christ; you have been dealing with those soul-winners. Paul said, "*I commend you to God.*"

Then, "*I commend you to the word of his grace.*" Now you listen to me; I am going to speak frankly and plainly; if you don't hear me it is your own fault. We do men an injustice to keep pressing upon them our booklets on; "how to, how to be saved, how to be born again, how to get started right, and how to be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

Do you know what Paul said to these people? He said, "*I commend you to God and to his word.*" Why don't we lay our books aside and tell people to bathe themselves in the Scripture, to bury their faces in the Word of God?

This is the true Word of God; our books on "How To" are nothing in the world but the deception with which we have been deceived. You don't need any "How To" books; you need the Word of God. He said, "*My word will not return void.*"

Now listen; Paul said, "*I have coveted no man's silver or gold or apparel.*" **Verse 33** says, "*I haven't coveted anything that you have got.*" This world has a legitimate complaint against pastors, preachers, churches, and evangelists who are forever holding out their hands for a donation.

It has become a million dollar enterprise; religion is a multi-billion dollar business. That's what it is; it is show business. It has become sickening and it has become disgusting to see preachers and churches become professional beggars in the name of the Lord God.

It's so sad; we are selling records, lapel pins, trinkets, religious toys, good luck charms, overpriced books and Bibles. We are selling bricks and pieces of land to people who will never see them.

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We are organizing clubs and promising blessings, even healing and salvation, in return for a dollar. We are having candy sales, bazars, car washes, and everything else for a dollar and this is evil. I am going to tell you the truth; it is contrary to the Word of God.

If God does not and cannot meet the need of His church and of His Gospel and of His preacher secretly, by the free will gifts of His people, then we are not His people and we are not in His will and we better close our doors. That's a fact!

You read the Word of God. He says, "*My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Jesus Christ.*" I am saying that this money making scheme of selling pins, books, overpriced Bibles, and all of these things, is not of God.

God's way of supporting his work is not to barter, market, and sell, it is giving, giving, giving, out of the heart of the people, willingly and lovingly because they love the Gospel. God will meet the need of His church and meet the need of this program.

This is the ninth year of this program. We have never sold a lapel pin, or a record. We make these tapes of the broadcast. They cost \$2.00 to make them and to produce them and send them. We send them to you for that. But, God will meet our need; I know He will and He has.