# IT HAS BEEN A PRIVILEGE TO SERVE YOU

## (Acts 20:17-38)

6-22-2014

This message is the most difficult to ever preach. Condensing all thoughts into one message is (for me) impossible. What do I say? What do I omit from saying?

The farewell message of Paul in Acts 20 is where I decided to park for a few minutes this morning.

**Read: Acts 20:17-f**
**Prayer:**

### I count it a privilege

I can say with the Apostle Paul, "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry" (1 Tim. 1:12)

First Republic Bank slogan – It is a privilege to serve you

God expects exclusive service
Matthew 4:10
Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve (religious service; Spiritual Service).

Galatians 6:9
And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

Some encouragement for weary servants:

I have found that…

1. Serving the Lord…Returns the Greatest Gratitude (it's the best way to say thanks)

   Service is my reasonable service in light of what he has done for me

   Hebrews 12:28
   Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:

   Romans 12:1
   I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

   Luke 17:10
   So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.

I have found that…

2. Serving the Lord…Fulfills Life's Greatest Purpose

1 Cor. 15:58
Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

I have found that…

3. Serving the Lord…Meets People's Greatest Needs

2 Corinthians 5:18 And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

2 Cor. 9:12
For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God;

I have found that…

4. Serving the Lord…Taps into the Greatest Power

Col. 1:29
Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.

1 Peter 4:11
If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

I have found that…

5. Serving the Lord…Receives the Greatest Honor

John 12:26
If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.

Matthew 20:26,28
But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; …Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Note: The Highest order of created beings are angels and their lives involve ministry Hebrews 1:14

Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

I have found that…

6. Serving the Lord…Pays the Greatest Rewards

1 Corinthians 3:14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

I have found that…

7. Serving the Lord…Fills the Heart with the Greatest Joy

1 Thessalonians 2:19 For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?

John 15:11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

Acts 20:

The Ephesian church was started by Paul (Acts 18:19-20)

- Strengthened by Apollos and Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:24-28)
- Paul returned and ministered for 3 years on his 3rd missionary journey (Acts 19:1-20)
- He then went back to give a final admonition to the Ephesian pastors (Acts 20:16-38).
- Ephesus was a major commercial, political, religious, cosmopolitan area.
  Cities need the Gospel today!

Paul (during his 2nd and 3rd missionary journeys) had such an effective ministry "by the space of two years" that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks" (Acts 19:10); Now Paul summons the elders of Ephesus together for a final admonition.

I. **It's been a privilege that <u>I do not deserve</u>** ("Serving the Lord with all humility of mind" v.19)

It's been a privilege despite the challenges of inner-city ministry
"Many tears and temptations (trials)…" (v.19b)
Our challeges were of a different sort.
Not so much the in your face persecutions, but behind the scenes, demonic warfare;
The inconveniences of city life (schooling; parking; traffic; tickets; long lines; vandalism; burglaries; etc) Yet through it all, God has been so good!

**II. It's been a privilege to <u>preach the most vital message the world must hear</u>**

A. **A privilege to preach <u>God's message in a variety of settings</u>** (v.20)
- Privately ("you")
- Publicly ("taught you publickly")
- "House to house"

B. **A privilege to preach in a <u>multi-ethnic environment</u>** (v.21)
Jews, and also to the Greeks"
Here at FBC to over 40 countries!

C. **A privilege to preach the <u>Good News and the necessity of turning and trusting</u>** (v.21b)

**Turning:**
Repentance toward God (a turning from idols to the living God)
A transferred dependency
Repentance is a willingness to turn from whatever it is that is keeping you from turning to the Lord Jesus Christ

**Trusting:**
"Faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ"
Jesus is the sole object of our faith (Acts 16:31)

**III.** **It's been a privilege <u>to keep on keeping on</u>** (v.22-23)

v.22 – 23 - Like Paul, I do not know the what the future holds for my ministry. Paul had a sneek preview of some of the hardships he would face.

I came to minister in Queens with a bit of fear and uncertainty; And then settled in.
I leave to embark on a new ministry with a bit of fear and uncertainty.
But I know God's grace was with me and will remain with me.

v.24 - "but none of these things move me" – pray that I will be stedfast

My life verse: 1 Cor. 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

IV. **It's been a privilege to preach the <u>"whole counsel of God"</u>** (v.26-27)
Expositional preaching

V. **It's a privilege <u>to pass on the baton</u> to Thomas Overmiller** (v.28-31)
An admonition:

Pastor Overmiller,

- take heed to <u>yourself</u> (your walk with Jesus; your private life; your personal holiness; your character;)
- take heed to "all the flock" –
  Your job: To Oversee
  To Feed
  To Protect (v.30-31)

VI. **It's a privilege to entrust you to God** (from here on out) (v.32)

Just as a loving parent inevitably has to entrust their children to God, so does an undershepherd.

God takes care of His children
God's Word will continue to build you up

v. 33-35 – Paul's own hand provided his needs. And he was a giver.

I have been blessed by how FBC took care of our family

Concl. V.36-38 - Tears of Love

We have seen God answer so many prayers (Salvation of loved ones; Growth in people; God's provision)
Ex. The Money in the Box; The Gas Can

Things we have gone through (trials/death of loved ones)

- Things that made it special; Why it has been a blessing serving at FBC
- We have had more than just surface level relationships
- FBC is Hungry and open for God's Words
- How FBC ministers to oneanother
    - Greatness is in serving people
    - Serving people is serving Jesus
    - No greater service than Feeding God's Sheep (Peter, said Jesus, "Do you love me?" "Feed my sheep"

It's difficult to thank everyone (for fear of leaving someone out)
However, Paul in Romans sends greetings and thanks to specific people
I am thankful for you…