

## Come with us, we'll do you good

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**Bible Text:** Numbers 10:29

**Preached on:** Sunday, March 14, 2004

### Stornoway Free Church

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Numbers 10:29,

29 And Moses said unto Hobab, the son of Raguel the Midianite, Moses' father in law, We are journeying unto the place of which the LORD said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good: for the LORD hath spoken good concerning Israel.

Oh, who will show us any good is that which many say. So wrote the psalmist in one of his Psalms obviously hearing the common, popular cry of so many in his own day. A cry which has been echoed throughout the centuries even unto the present day. A cry of the human heart. "Who will show us any good?" And we don't need to look far or listen long in our own day to see and hear the same sentiments, people longing for something good: a good time; a good job; good health; good friends. Anything. Something good in a world so full of badness and sadness. It is little wonder that the cry goes up, "Is there any good? Will anyone show us any good?"

Perhaps that's the cry of your own heart tonight. Are you sitting here looking at your own life, looking at the life you see all around you and are you asking yourself, "Is there any good? Will anyone tell me anything good? Will anyone show me anything good? Will anyone give me anything good? Is there any good in this world?" Of course, this world has its own answers. Many reply, "Yes, we will show you good." We hear the politicians, the philosophers, the popular singers of the day, the pleasure seekers. We hear so many saying, "We'll show you good. This is the path of good. Follow us and we'll do you good, show you good and tell you good." False religion say the same. And you're sitting there saying, "Well, how do I know who is right?" You're saying maybe, the Christian church is saying, "We'll show you good." How do I trust them? How do I know? Why should I follow their voice and not another? Why should I believe them and nobody else?

Well, these verses here bring us to a similar situation where the church, characterized by Moses, was seeking to persuade an unbeliever that sticking with, staying with the people of God, attaching himself to Israel, would be the way to find good. Moses gives this man, Hobab, 4 reasons why he should join himself to Israel. The first is, he says, "We are going to a good place." "Moses said unto Hobab, the son of Raguel the Midianite, Moses' father in law, We are journeying unto the place of which the LORD said, I will give it

you." The children of Israel had been at the foot of Sinai for about 11 months. They had received the law, they had built the portable tabernacle and now they were getting organized for what they thought was the final march into Canaan. Here is Hobab, he is a Midianite. Well, Moses as we know, was in Midian for about 40 years when he had to flee from Egypt before he returned to Egypt to deliver Israel. In that time, he married a Midianite woman. Her Midianite father was a man called Jethro or Raguel and this is spoken of here. Hobab was the son of Raguel, the Midianite. We know from the rest of Scripture that Jethro, Hobab's father, was a good man. That he was a worshiper of Jehovah. So Hobab, his son, here is caught in the valley of decision. He has attached himself to Israel for 11 months and now Israel is moving away from Midian, moving on towards the Promised Land, and Hobab has to choose, "Is it back to Midian or is it real commitment to Israel? Is it back to my idols or is it onwards with Jehovah, the God of Israel?"

He had, of course, the witness of his father as well, Jethro. No doubt his own father was pleading with him and seeking to persuade him but here Moses takes upon himself this task of witnessing to his brother-in-law, Hobab, and he's saying, "Come with us. We're journeying to a good place, the place the Lord said, I will give it to you. It's a good place." It's a reasonable question to ask when somebody says, "Come with me." "Where are you going?" If somebody came along the street in a car and said, "Jump in. We're going on a journey," you surely would ask, "Well, where are you going?" And so Moses here recognizes Hobab's uncertainty and he says, "We know where we are going. This isn't just a journey into the beyond, into the unknown. This is a journey to a known place. A God given place."

And he describes it as the place of which the Lord said, "I will give it you." This takes us back to words in Exodus where God says, for example in chapter 6, "I will bring you in unto the land concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob and I will give it you for an heritage." Earlier on it's described as the land which flowed with milk and with honey, speaking of peace and prosperity, freedom, joy. Here Moses is saying, "Hobab, we're on the way to the Promised Land. We have to go through the wilderness to get there but that's where we're going. We're going to a good place, a God given place. Come with us."

Another reasonable question to ask is, "How certain is it that we'll get there?" It's one thing to set off on a journey, it's one thing to have an aim, a destination to aim towards but how sure can I be that we will get there? Here Moses' words surely answer this objection. "We're not traveling to a place we picked out ourselves. We're not traveling just a spot on the map that we would like to go to. We're going to a place which God has given to us." And what does that gift mean? It means first of all that we're not worthy of this land. That it is the gift of God. It's an expression of his mercy towards us. "We are going to a land which is entirely of grace which none of us could ever merit or earn a place in." And the gift of God also communicate certainty. If God has given it, then we will receive it.

Surely there are parallels and analogies here with the Christian seeking to persuade the unbeliever to come with them, to attach themselves to the people of God, to follow the Lord. Why should you? Why should you come with us? Here's the first reason: we're going to a good place. We're not just wandering. We're not just heading around without a direction and an aim and a destination in view. We're going to a place of which God has said, "I will give it you." The Promised Land, we're told in the New Testament, is a type and picture of heaven itself. That's where we're going. We're going to heaven. The Promised Land. The God given country. The place that flows with milk and honey, peace and prosperity, freedom and joy. Yes, we have to go through the wilderness to get there but we know where we are going and we are certain of arriving because God has said, "I will give it to you." None of us, no Christian anywhere will ever say, "I deserve heaven. I have merited this place." No, forever they will say, "All of grace, all of mercy. This is entirely the gift of God." But the gift make it's no less certain. The gift makes it absolutely certain. If God has given it, if God has promised it, then if we follow him, we shall enter it and receive it and enjoy it.

So as Moses said to Hobab, I say and all Christians say to you, "Come with us. We're going to a good place." Do you know where you're going? The Bible tells you where you're going. The Bible tells you that you are going to a bad place, an evil place, a place prepared for the devil and his angels, a place you deserve to go, a place called hell. You're going in one of 2 directions. Where are you going? The good place? Or the bad place?

But then secondly Moses says to Hobab, "Hobab, come with us." "Why?" "Because will do you good. Not just that we're going to a good place but we will do you good on the way." Again, it's a reasonable question to ask if you're going on a journey, "What will the journey be like?" Yes, we know what's at the end but what's in between? Moses says, "We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good." Now, before anyone can do us good, God has to be good to them. No person has any goodness in them that they can communicate to another person without God first putting it there. As he says in verse 32, "It shall be, if thou go with us, yea, it shall be, that what goodness the LORD shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee." Moses was in a position where he could say to Hobab, "Come with us and we will do you good." "How can you do us good?" "Because God has done us good and the same good that God has done to us we will do to you."

It's a reasonable question, "What kind of journey will it be like?" And any journey largely depends on your traveling companions. Yes, the scenery is important. Yes, the mode of transport is important. But the most important thing, what transforms a journey or ruins a journey is one's traveling companions. They can make it or they can break it. And Moses says here, "We will make it for you. We will do you good on the journey." What kind of good is Moses speaking of, though? Well, this was not a rich people. These were now nomads in the middle of a wilderness. Moses was basically saying, "Silver and gold have I none but such as I have, give I thee." Moses was saying, "Come with us and we will do you not financial good, not so much physical good, not so much social good, we will do you spiritual good. That's what God has done to us. God has done great good to us in our

souls." He's saying, "I have experienced not just an outward redemption, great though that was," but Moses had experienced an inward redemption. This is not just an outward deliverance but an inward deliverance. God was not just appearing outwardly to Moses but was dwelling in his own heart and Moses was saying to Hobab, "You come with us and we will do our utmost to do you spiritual good." He's saying, "Come and share with us in the blessings of salvation. Come with us and what God has given us, we will do our best to give to you. We'll give you instructions in the truth of God. We will pray for you. We will encourage you. We will seek to correct you when you go wrong. We will bring to you our experiences of God's goodness and share them with you. We will maintain your hope when it is flagging. We will feed your faith when you are doubting. We will seek to bring you to repentance when you're turning toward sin. The good that has been done to us, we will do to you."

And this surely is one of the great motivations of the Christian witness as well. The more the Christian realizes the good that God has done to them, the far more likely they are to go out to others and say, "Come with us and we will do you good." The best witnesses, the best evangelists, the best missionaries amongst God's people are those who have come to a deep seated appreciation of the goodness of God to them in their souls. And if we have that, we cannot but overflow with this desire, with this longing that others would share in the same blessings, knowing that unlike in this world when somebody comes and takes a share of what we have, we end up with less; in spiritual things, when somebody comes and takes a share of what we have, we end up with more. So we would say to you, friend, here tonight, "Come with us and we will seek to do you good. We will pray for you. We will seek to instruct you. We will seek to be a help and not a hindrance. We will seek to encourage you in the ways of truth. We will seek to guide you into joy and peace and believing. We will seek to do you good to your soul. We can't give you silver, we can't give you gold. We can't give you social reputation. We can't give you much that this world can give you but we long and desire to share with you the good things of the Gospel," and what we say to you we say to all outside the walls of this church. Surely every Christian has this heartfelt desire to share and communicate the Gospel.

I was reading statistics recently, they were American but I'm sure there are similarities, that said 95% of all Christians had never led anyone to the Lord and we don't like that terminology but maybe we could translate it a little bit into our own culture. How many, what percentage of Christians have never actually asked anyone to come to church? It would be frightening, I think. Do we not have anything good to say, to share, to show, to give? Have we experienced the goodness of God but want to keep it all to ourselves? When David Brainerd, the famous missionary to the Indians, was once on the banks of the Delaware he was speaking to somebody visiting him and he said, "I care not where I live or what hardships I go through so that I can but gain souls to Christ. While I am asleep, I dream of these things. As soon as I awake, the first thing I think of is this great work. All my desire is the conversion of sinners and all my hope is in God." George Whitfield, the famous English evangelist said, "Oh Lord, give me souls or take my soul." Henry Martin, the missionary to India, knelt down on the coral shores of the Indian Ocean and cried out as he arrived, "Here, let me burn out for God." Martin Luther said, "Do thou, my God, do thou, my God, God, stand by me against all the world's wisdom

and reason. Oh do it, thou must do it. Stand by me thou true, eternal God." John Hunt, a missionary to the Fiji Islands uttered this prayer on his dying bed, "Lord, save Fiji! Save Fiji! Save these people, O Lord! Have mercy upon Fiji! Save Fiji!" Oh where has that spirit gone? May God give it to us again. May God fill our hearts with this burning desire to share the good we have experienced with others who so desperately need it.

But then thirdly, he says to Hobab, "Come with us and God will do you good." Not just we're going to a good place. Not just we will do you good, but God himself will do you good. In verse 29 he says, "for the LORD hath spoken good concerning Israel." His people. His covenant nation. The Lord has spoken good concerning Israel. Well, we desire to do good surely to others, but we often fail. We often do the opposite in our sinfulness and in our ignorance. We sometimes wonder do we do people more bad than good? Do we put more people off than attract people in? Do we do more bad than good? But one thing is for sure: the Lord has spoken good and he will do it as he has promised. He won't disappoint you. He won't let you down. He won't break his promises. Christians can have good intentions, God has more than good intentions. Christians will let you down, God will never let you down because God has spoken good concerning Israel. Concerning Israel. This is what Moses was saying to Hobab, "Hobab, you go to Midian and you will have no part in this. God has spoken no good concerning Midian. God has spoken no good concerning anyone who refuses to attach himself to his people. There is no good outside God's Israel. No saving good. If you want ultimate good, if you want God's saving goodness, Hobab, you must attach yourself to Israel. You must turn your back on Midian, it's culture, it's idols, it's practices, and you must become an Israelite, a follower of Jehovah, Israel's God." So we say to you also, the Lord has spoken good concerning his people. His elect. His chosen ones. Here are the people who are blessed indeed. Blessed above all others. How many times and how many places throughout the Bible we read of the good promises of God toward his people. Are you one of them?

Where are you going to get good, you say. Who will do me any good? Only God ultimately can do you ultimate, eternal good. Where else are you going to get it? You have to separate from the world, the Midian of this day, the idols, the culture, the practices, the principles, the beliefs of this evil world and attach yourself and join yourself to the people of God as they attach themselves to the Lord. The Lord has spoken good concerning Israel. Come with us. Who is going to do you good? Do you think the ungodly have your good at heart? Spiritual good, do you think that? Do you think ungodly friends are going to do you good and lead you in the right way? Do you think following the dictates of the devil is going to do you good? Do you think he is a more reliable supplier of good than God? Come with us. Come with us. We will try to do you good and God will do you good.

But then finally he says, "and you will do us good." Isn't that an amazing thing to say? Not just we're going to good place, not just we will do you good and not just God will do you good but come with us because you will do us good. In verse 31, Moses says, "Leave us not, I pray thee; forasmuch as thou knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness, and thou mayest be to us instead of eyes." Here Moses is saying, "Hobab, we need you. We could use you. You would be a tremendous asset to this great journey and this great

people." They had the pillar of cloud which would give them general guidance and general direction but there was much in their daily lives as we mentioned this morning, that they had to, as it were, figure out themselves. Much concerning where water would be, which plants to feed their animals, what areas were safe to go in. And Hobab, being a Midianite, was very familiar with the terrain, with the dangers, with the animals, with the vegetation and here Moses is saying, "If you come with us, you can be our eyes. You can help us in so many ways as we travel on, as we journey on in our pilgrimage." Moses is basically saying, "Look, we won't perish if you don't come, but it would be much safer and easier for us if you did come. If you don't come, we will survive but if you do come, we will get on a lot better."

It may be that God has blessed you with gifts and abilities and talents that would be of enormous benefit to the church of Christ. I'm sure all of us can look anywhere in this building and wherever we look we see somebody with something to offer the church of Christ and the cause of Christ. We can see potential. We can see gifts. We can see talents. Now, the church will survive without you but do you know what would do far more? It would get on perhaps even better with you, with these God given abilities, talents and skills, dedicated and consecrated to God. How much good you could do to the people of God and the church of God. Will you not come with us? You can do us good. You can benefit us. You can be a blessing to the church. Come with us.

How does Hobab answer? Verse 30, "He said unto him," well, sad words, maybe words you're saying in your own heart tonight, "I will not go." "Hobab, are you serious? I've given you 4 excellent reasons for coming with us and you say no? What are you going back to? What is your alternative? Can you really say that what you're going to is better than this? Are you going to a better place? Are you going to a better people? Are you going to a better God? Are you going to give your gifts to a greater and better cause?" "I will not go. I will not go." How Moses' heart must've broken as he heard these words of his brother-in-law. How many Christian hearts break, father's hearts, mother's hearts, husband's hearts, wives' hearts break as week after week and Sabbath after Sabbath, reason after reason is given to people to join themselves to Christ and by their actions if not by their words they are saying, "I will not go." Say it out loud when you get home. Recognize what you're doing. You are hearing the Gospel. You are hearing God saying to you, "Come," and you are saying, "No." All this good is extended toward you and you're saying, "No."

So does Moses just give up? Well, he gave him one chance and he didn't take it? No, he doesn't. In verse 30 he says, "I will not go; but I will depart to mine own land, and to my kindred, in God's land and God's people but my land and my people. I'm not for the invisible in the future but for the visible and the present." Moses says, "Leave us not, I pray you." Here we have this ambassador for God, this pleader, this beseecher, this persuader, this arguer, this man who sees the eternal future and destiny of Hobab stretching out in front of him. He sees this critical turning point in his life, this choice between life and death, between good and bad, between heaven and hell. Hobab says, "No. I want hell. I want evil. I want darkness." And we can almost see Moses going down on the knees of his soul and saying to this man, "Leave us not, I pray you. Oh, listen to

my pleadings. Listen to my arguments. Listen to my persuasions and make a better choice."

We say this to you again, friends, "Leave us not. Don't walk away again into the night, into the darkness, into the storm and then into eternity. Leave us not. Come. Don't leave. Don't turn away again. Don't choose darkness again. Don't choose evil again. Turn from the road that journeys to hell. Come with us. We will do you good. Come with us. God will do you good. Come with us. You can do us good. Come with us. We're going to a good place. Leave us not, we pray you. Leave us not."

We wonder, don't we, what was the end result? There is evidence in the book of Judges that Hobab's family was numbered amongst the children of Israel which would suggest that Hobab himself did come and didn't leave. We hope so. But what about yourself? Now will you come or will you go?

Let us pray.

*O Lord, some of us remember the irrational choices we were making Sabbath after Sabbath. We say it so many times, "I will not go." But in thy mercy through thy ambassadors, thou didst continue to reason and persuade and plead and beseech. We thank thee that one day our hearts were broken, our defenses were demolished and we said, "Yes, I will go." We pray for those present and known to us who are still persisting in this course, this irrational, destructive course. O Lord, show them the goodness that thou hast in store for those who fear thee. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which thou hast prepared for those that love thee, that thou canst reveal them to us by thy Spirit and we pray that thou wouldst for Jesus' sake. Amen.*