

None of These Things Move Me

Acts 20:17-38

I. INTRODUCTION: I

1. **2** There is a song we sing titled: "I Shall Not Be Moved" (based on Jer. 17:8-9)

******Glory hallelujah, I shall not be moved
Anchored in Jehovah, I shall not be moved
Just like a tree that's planted by the waters
I shall not be moved
In His love abiding, I shall not be moved
And in Him confiding, I shall not be moved
Just like the tree that's planted by the water
I shall not be moved
I shall not be, I shall not be moved
I shall not be, I shall not be moved
Just like a tree that's planted by the water
I shall not be moved
Though all hell assail me, I shall not be moved
Jesus will not fail me, I shall not be moved
Just like the tree that's planted by the water
I shall not be moved
Though the tempest rages, I shall not be moved
On the rock of ages, I shall not be moved
Just like the tree that's planted by the water
I shall not be moved
I shall not be, I shall not be moved
I shall not be, I shall not be moved
Just like the tree that's planted by the water
I shall not be moved
I shall not be, I shall not be moved
I shall not be, I shall not be moved
Just like the tree that's planted by the water
I shall not be moved

2. ****** Paul demonstrates this attitude as well as any disciple of the Lord.

A. For example, in Paul's touching speech to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20, he says:

Acts 20:22-24: "...now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, ²³ except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me. ²⁴ But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God."

B. His strength of character has long been a source of strength for all saints:

Phil. 1:12-14: "But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, ¹³ so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ; ¹⁴ and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear."

C. In Paul's words we see calmness, confidence and self-possession (i.e., composure, poise).

(1) This calmness, confidence and poise came because of his dependence upon God.

(2) Paul was well-aware of what he had signed up for:

Acts 9:15-16: “But the Lord said to him, ‘Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. 16 For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name’s sake.’”

2 Tim. 1:11-12: “to which I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. 12 For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.”

(3) Paul was a practitioner of true faith:

Heb. 11:6: “But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.” (cf. Phil. 4:13)

3. ** Devoted Christian’s hearts are not filled with fear because of afflictions and external circumstances of life.

Matt. 10:28: “And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” (cf. Matt. 6:24–34)

Heb. 13:5-6: “...For He Himself has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’ 6 So we may boldly say:

‘The Lord is my helper;
I will not fear.
What can man do to me?’”

4. ** The church today has a desperate need for Christians to be strong in the face of modern-day afflictions and tribulations; we must not be moved by these things just as Paul was not moved:

1 Cor. 16:13: “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.” (KJV)

1 Cor. 15:58: “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”

Col. 1:23: “if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel...”

5. 3 Let’s look at some things that some Christians allow to “move” them and weaken (destroy) their faith.

II. DISCUSSION:

I. 4 Some things that did not move Paul:

A. ** Former religious ties:

Gal. 1:13-14: “For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews’ religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: 14 And profited in the Jews’ religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.” (KJV)

Phil. 3:4-8: “Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: 5 Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; 6 Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. 7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. 8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss

for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,” (KJV)

B. ****** Monetary considerations:

Phil. 4:11-13: “Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: 12 I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

Acts 20:33-35: “I have coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. 34 Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me. 35 I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

1 Tim. 6:6-10: “Now godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. 8 And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. 9 But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”

1 Cor. 9:11-18: “If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things? 12 If others are partakers of this right over you, are we not even more? Nevertheless we have not used this right, but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ. 13 Do you not know that those who minister the holy things eat of the things of the temple, and those who serve at the altar partake of the offerings of the altar? 14 Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel. 15 But I have used none of these things, nor have I written these things that it should be done so to me; for it would be better for me to die than that anyone should make my boasting void. 16 For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel! 17 For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship. 18 What is my reward then? That when I preach the gospel, I may present the gospel of Christ without charge, that I may not abuse my authority in the gospel.”

C. ****** Loss of fame:

Gal. 1:14: “And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.”

Phil. 3:8: “Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ...”

D. ****** Persecutions:

(1) Bonds:

Acts 20:23: “except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me.”

Acts 21:10-14: “And as we stayed many days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. 11 When he had come to us, he took Paul's belt, bound his own hands and feet, and said, ‘Thus says the Holy Spirit, ‘So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.’ 12 Now when we heard these things, both we and those from that place pleaded with him not to go up to Jerusalem. 13 Then Paul answered,

‘What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.’ 14 So when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, ‘The will of the Lord be done.’”

(2) Stoning:

Acts 14:19-22: *“Then Jews from Antioch and Iconium came there; and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead. 20 However, when the disciples gathered around him, he rose up and went into the city. And the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe. 21 And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, 22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, ‘We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.’”*

(3) Beatings and imprisonment:

Acts 16:19-24: *“But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to the authorities. 20 And they brought them to the magistrates, and said, ‘These men, being Jews, exceedingly trouble our city; 21 and they teach customs which are not lawful for us, being Romans, to receive or observe.’ 22 Then the multitude rose up together against them; and the magistrates tore off their clothes and commanded them to be beaten with rods. 23 And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely. 24 Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.”*

(4) Severe criticism:

2 Cor. 10:10: *“‘For his letters,’ they say, ‘are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible.’”*

E. ****** Failure of others:

Gal. 2:11-14: *“Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; 12 for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. 13 And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy. 14 But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, ‘If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?’”*

2 Tim. 4:10-11: *“for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica — Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia. 11 Only Luke is with me...”*

F. ****** False brethren:

2 Cor. 11:26: *“...in perils among false brethren...”*

Gal. 2:4-5: *“And this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage), 5 to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.”*

G. ****** Roman imprisonment:

Acts 28:16, 30-31: *“Now when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard; but Paul was permitted to dwell by himself with the soldier who guarded him. 30 Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, 31*

preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him.”

H. **** Afflictions:**

2 Tim. 3:10-13: *“But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, 11 persecutions, **afflictions**, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra — what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me. 12 Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.”*

2. **5 What moves you?**

A. Paul was an amazing pillar of strength, courage and faith!

(1) We marvel at the many difficulties Paul faced (2 Cor. 11:23-28; 12:1-10).

(2) Yet, through all of it, he was not moved!

(3) No doubt he became depressed and dejected, but he never “threw in the towel”!

2 Cor. 1:8-10: *“For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life. 9 Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, 10 who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us,”*

B. Sadly, by comparison, many Christians today are moved by such trivial things.

(1) **** Popularity:** The desire for popularity moves many.

(a) People’s desire to be popular outstrips their dedication to righteousness and truth.

(b) “Shhhh! Don’t say anything, don’t rock the boat or they’ll know we’re Christians.”

(c) Many want all men to speak well of them, and if they stand up for the Lord they know they will be unpopular.

(d) Jesus speaks on this subject

Lk. 6:26: *“Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.”*

(e) I can tell you from personal experience, it is not easy to get into the pulpit and preach the truth knowing full well its going to step heavily on someone’s toes who is in the audience.

(f) Call it peer pressure, call it being weak-kneed, no one is immune to it! Because of such pressure many will wilt when the “rubber meets the road” (e.g., preachers, elders, young people, older people, etc.).

Jn. 12: 42–43: *“Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; 43 for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.”*

(g) The only one whose approval really matters to us should be the Lord!

Gal. 1:10: *“For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.”*

1 Thess. 2:4-6: *“But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts. 5 For neither at any*

time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness — God is witness. 6 Nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others...”

- (h) A couple of things I've found over the years is that when you strive to be popular the very people with which you are trying to curry favor are very fickle (“fool’s errand”).
- (i) No matter how hard you try, you’ll never be popular with some.
 - (ii) And, you will ultimately lose favor with those you strive to curry favor.
- (2) **** Worldliness:** worldliness moves many.
- (a) Many Christians are just simply worldly minded.
 - (b) Worldliness is a deadly disease:
1 Jn. 2:15-17: “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world — the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life — is not of the Father but is of the world. 17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.”
 - (c) We cannot serve two masters!
Jas. 4:4: “Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”
 - (d) Some members are worldly:
 - ☛ Immodest and lascivious in dress (1 Tim. 2:9-10; Gal. 5:19).
 - ☛ Immodest and lascivious in behavior (e.g., internet porn).
 - ☛ Mixed swimming (lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh).
 - ☛ Vulgar movies and TV shows (lust of the eyes).
 - ☛ Dancing (Gal. 5:19; lasciviousness, unchaste handling of males and females).
 - ☛ Crude and vulgar language (Eph. 4:29).
 - ☛ Social drinking (1 Pet. 4:3-4).
 - ☛ Lottery (1 Tim. 6:9-10; Eccl. 5:10).**2 Cor. 6:17-7:1:** “Therefore
‘Come out from among them
And be separate, says the Lord.
Do not touch what is unclean,
And I will receive you.”
18 ‘I will be a Father to you,
And you shall be My sons and daughters,
Says the LORD Almighty.’
7 Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”
- (3) **** False brethren:** 2 Cor. 11:26; Gal. 2:4
- (a) Nobody enjoys hurting someone else’s feelings.
 - (b) But we are not someone’s enemy when we tell them the truth (Eph. 4:15; Gal. 4:16).
 - (c) Unpleasant? YES! But it is our duty! Ezek. 33:7-9

- (4) **** False doctrine:** The allure of false doctrine appeals to some (Ego? Lusts?).
- (a) Many have not studied the Bible as they should and have been carried with every wind of doctrine (Eph. 4:14; Gal. 1:6).
 - (b) They believe what their favorite preacher believes (1 Cor. 4:6).
 - (c) We have an obligation to expose error (It's not pleasant but must be done!):

Eph. 5:11: *“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.”*

Rom. 16:17-18: *“Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. 18 For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.”*

2 Jn. 9-11: *“Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. 10 If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; 11 for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds.”*
- (5) **** Love of money:** the love of money moves many.
- (a) Paul warns:

1 Tim. 6: 6–10: *“Now godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. 8 And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. 9 But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”*
 - (b) Jesus warns:

Matt. 13:22: *“Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful.”*

Lk. 12:15: *“And He said to them, ‘Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.’”*
 - (c) Riches often create many more problems than they solve:

Heb. 13:5: *“Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have.”*
 - (d) We Americans are more wealthy than we like to admit!
- (6) **** Love of pleasure:** the love of pleasure moves many.
- 2 Tim. 3:1-5:** *“But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, 4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, **lovers of pleasure** rather than lovers of God, 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power.”*
- (a) These “Christians” will talk a good game and fool many but note v. 5.
 - (b) Some would rather go “play” (e.g., golf, fishing, ballgames, etc.) than attend the services of the church (Matt. 5:6; 6:33).

- (c) Some would rather watch TV or play video games than to study the Bible.
- (7) **** Love of family:** the love of family and friends moves many; the inability to give up loved ones for Christ moves many.

- (a) The hardest thing to do is forsake family:

Matt. 10: 34–37: “Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. 35 For I have come to ‘set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law’; 36 and ‘a man’s enemies will be those of his own household.’ 37 He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.”

- (b) Our obedience to the truth has no bearing whatsoever on the eternal destiny of our loved ones.
- (c) But it is a tragedy to let the disobedience of our loved ones to stand in the way of our obedience to God!

Lk. 9:57-62: “Now it happened as they journeyed on the road, that someone said to Him, ‘Lord, I will follow You wherever You go.’ 58 And Jesus said to him, ‘Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.’ 59 Then He said to another, ‘Follow Me.’ But he said, ‘Lord, let me first go and bury my father.’ 60 Jesus said to him, ‘Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God.’ 61 And another also said, ‘Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house.’ 62 But Jesus said to him, ‘No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.’”

III. CONCLUSION: 6

1. What “moved” Paul?

Acts 20:24: “...that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.”

Phil. 1:21: “For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”

2 Tim. 4:7-8: “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.”

2. What “moves” you?

A. Is it the things that “moved” Paul?

B. If not, your death will not be gain! Phil. 1:21

3. Invitation

—Adapted from a sermon (*None of These Things Move Me*) by Donald Townsley.