

20 December 2020
(WTB)

Preparing for Big and Bold

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Scripture reference: 2 Corinthians 6:14-16 (KJV); Luke 7:1-10 (NKJV); Matthew 8:5-12 (NKJV); Matthew 8:10-13 (TPT); Ephesians 4:7-8 (TPT); Ephesians 4:11-16 (TPT)

Good morning, church. Thank you for coming to church today. Yes, I know we're a church, on a digital platform online, on TV, wherever and however you're watching, some sort of mobile device. Thank you for tuning in today.

Yes, it is unusual for us to be having a service like this, we've become quite used to gathering together again on Sundays. As it turns out, before our President made an announcement about some of the changes he was making for December and January, many of you would have heard my announcement in the church in Witbank, perhaps the Joburg church hadn't yet been informed, but we had already decided that the special services would be Christmas, Christmas morning service with us at Heritage of Faith at nine o'clock.

On TBN, at seven o'clock on the same day, Christmas night, for the whole nation, we will be on TBN, ministering this Christmas Service to them. Then of course, on Sunday, the 27th, digital service at nine am in the morning for everybody, and then again, this special service, and these times will be on your screen, and you'll be getting emails and messages. So, just watch the news, but special service, New Year's Eve at 10:30 in the evening, from the Lord to you, already put on TV. And then of course, Sunday, the 3rd of January, we're on digital service again.

So, all of those things have already been decided and already prepared and, and ready to go. When I made those decisions, I had no idea that our President was going to encourage people not together for Christmas Services and not to gather and reduce the amount of people that could come together over this period of time in indoor gatherings. He was going to encourage people not to travel and, just basically impose some selected new sort of rules, but the Holy Spirit had already prepared us, and so we decided that instead of having service again, on the 20th, we would do a digital service. Announcements over; now it's time for the Word of God.

I'm so delighted to bring you an awesome message of the Word of God to you today. Because what's on my heart is really something the Lord has been building in me. I believe this is a morning where I will begin to share some of the significant things that God has been sharing with me. If the Witbank people would have been listening to my message in *Light and Dark; I will take the children and Light and Dark*, I might have still had an opportunity to preach it in Joburg, but not to be. However, please go and get it on podcast, on the web, on the website, or on YouTube. You need to be able to listen to it. I think it's a really significant message on *Light and Dark*. It answers some really great questions.

On the back of that, this message is, the title of my message: *Preparing For Big And Bold* and I'm reading second Corinthians chapter 6 verse 14, and it reads like this, **¹⁴Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? ¹⁵And what concord hath Christ with Belial, or with the devil? or**

what part hath he that believeth with an unbeliever, an infidel ¹⁶And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people (2 Corinthians 6:14-16 KJV).

This is a passage of scripture I used last Sunday when I talked about light and dark. I don't want to focus so much on so many of the things I talked about, about the light and the dark, but I want to talk about; for *you are the temple of the living God*, you are the temple of the living God, as God has said, "I will dwell in them."

This is the greatest, the greatest, magnificent, most wonderful story ever told to humankind, God willingly wants to live in us, willingly wants to be part of us. He wants to walk with us, He wants to walk in us, and I will be their God and they shall be My people. I mean, there is no greater thing that could ever happen, is that as a Gentile, where there was no covenant with God, God said, "I choose you. Now, will you choose me?" That is just a wonderful thing.

On the foundation of this amazing, amazing, wonderful privilege that we have, this great advantage that we have in life, this great wonder and awesomeness that we have in life, that we have such a personal walk with God; I want to read you a story about a centurion. Before I read you the story of the centurion, I want to tell you that I'm going to give you, after the story, I'm going to give you some definitions of bold and I'm going to give you some definitions of big, but I first want to read the story to you.

There's two versions of the story. There's the version in Luke and the version in Matthew, well, versions of the story that have got details to it. I will show you how they differ slightly, but actually are in agreement.

Luke chapter 7 verse 1 to 10, the New King James Version says, **¹Now when He concluded all His sayings, Jesus, in the hearing of the people, He entered Capernaum. ²And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear to him, was sick and ready to die. ³So when he heard about Jesus, he sent elders of the Jews to Him, pleading with Him to come and heal his servant. ⁴And when they came to Jesus, they begged Him earnestly, saying that the one for whom He should do this was deserving,** in other words, this is a good man, he's done many good things and just surely, on his goodness, he should be given the opportunity. ⁵ **"for he loves our nation, and has built us a synagogue."**

So, these are covenant men, covenant nation, making a plea to Jesus for a non-covenant, by birth, a non-covenant person, a gentile. **⁶Then Jesus went with them. And when He was already not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to Him, saying to Him, "Lord, do not trouble Yourself, for I am not worthy that You should enter under my roof. ⁷Therefore I did not even think myself worthy to come to You. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. ⁸For I also am a man placed under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." ⁹When Jesus heard these things, He marveled at him, and turned around and said to the crowd that followed Him, "I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!" ¹⁰And**

those who were sent, returning to the house, found the servant well who had been sick. (Luke 7:1-10 NKJV)

So, there's a few things that I want to say to you here. The first thing I want to say to you here; here is a non-covenant man, he's a gentile, but he has a relationship with God's covenant people, he has seen something in their lives, in their traditions, in the way that they worship God, in their devoutness, in their family relationships, he's an occupying Roman soldier, officer. He's an occupying force. As such, all of these people that were in his world around him, they were his servants, to some extent, one could even say, slaves because if he ever gave an instruction, even one of his soldiers gave an instruction to a Jewish person, they immediately had to obey that command.

If they wanted to just take over someone's house, they could just annex the house and take it. They were an occupying force. So, this, this man, this centurion, had a very different relationship with God's people to most other Romans and most other Roman officers. He saw something about these people that was, in his heart, was big enough and great enough to actually be something different. He wanted to be generous, he wanted to be participating in their society. Very unusual.

It's also unusual that the relationship that he had with these people would translate in, the transfer of his wealth. He had wealth that he used to build the synagogue. So, that means, materials, labor, you know, keeping people, feeding them, looking after their health, while they're building a synagogue. Planning one giving land for one. I mean, this is quite a significant thing, that this man would use his wealth, to actually build a house of worship for Jehovah, for Yahweh, for Yahweh's covenant people. He built a house of worship. He used his wealth to do this. There is some faith in that. There is quite some trust in that because he did not know this God, he only observed this God.

There is absolutely no indication in the Bible, that he did anything, like, go through their rituals, have circumcision, or anything like that, that would indicate that he changed his religion, outwardly, anyway, to a Jewish religion, but here he was transferring his wealth. That meant that he had a great deal of faith in this God that these Jewish people served. Otherwise, why build them a house of worship? Why build them a house of worship, that means that they would worship their God rather than worship the god that was Caesar, the god that was the Roman Emperor, who declared himself to be god.

He was a Roman, I mean it could be punishable by death if you didn't see it that way. Why build a place of worship? There was already faith building in the hearing of the way that they worshipped God, in the relational concept of the way that they worshipped God. The relational connections between the families and the tribes and the way they live together in the worship of this God. There was already a strong faith in him.

It's quite significant, that he has someone very close to him, that's so sick that they're on the point of death. He goes to the elders of Israel and he goes to them and he asks them, "Would you go and plead with Jesus on my behalf and ask Him to come and pray for my sick servant?" You'll see in the book of Luke, it actually says, "My son." It's probably a servant that he has adopted as a son.

It's quite extraordinary that these religious leaders would put their reputations on the line to go and speak to Jesus, who was a very controversial figure, to go and ask Him to come and pray. Whether the Jewish people recognised Jesus' authority, spiritually, or not, they went and asked Him on behalf of the roman officer, and so there are quite a lot of things going on here.

I am wanting to talk to you about *Big and Bold* because what this Centurion did was big in the way that he served God's people. When the time came, he could translate that *bigness* into a big, bold request, into a big, bold action.

It is just this way that whenever you want God's attention, it's always going to require something of yourself to show that you put your faith in God. It is always going to require something that you need to do to show Him that you trust Him, that you love Him and that His ways are the ways that you want to follow. Always. You can almost bet on it that something will happen to try and prevent you from acting on your desire and showing God what it is.

Just stay with me for a moment because I'm going to get to read it again to you from the book of Luke because it will give you a bit more emphasis. I just want to read you some definitions of *Big*.

Big is, obviously, *grown-up*, small grown up, but it also is *on an ambitiously large scale*, it could mean *showing great enthusiasm*, it could mean *very successful*, big being very successful. Could mean, *of considerable importance or seriousness*. These are all definitions that come from the dictionary. *Holding an important position or playing an influential role*. Here is one of the definitions of big; *generous*, and they would refer to that, *"That's big of you"*, *generosity is showing bigness, marked superior in character or quality; a marked superior, in character and quality, much beyond the extraordinary*. Wow, I want to tell you these are really wonderful definitions of *big*.

When God began to give me the word of being *Big and Bold in 2021*, I began to see this is something that's ambitious, something that's large, but it's not just about things or buildings or places, these are merely just places that we can do other extraordinary things, other important influential things. These are places where we can do things that are of considerable importance or seriousness. These are things where we could start to do things that are marked as superior in character and quality. When we are saying we're going *big*, it's also we're growing up, we're growing up we're not staying where we were before. We're growing up. Hallelujah.

Yes, it does also mean often that we do things on a very large scale, and I'm pressing for that, but I wanted to share with you that it means many more things. Influential things and it means lots of enthusiasm. Things that are serious and important and these things are what God has put in my heart for us to do in 2021.

So what about bold? I'm going to give you a few things on bold. *Bold* is daring, courageous and brave. It also means requiring courage in the execution of what you're doing. So, it's not just being daring, courageous, and brave, it's about what you're doing, and as you go about doing it, to the execution of it that you are courageous and brave in doing that. You execute things with the spirit of boldness,

confident and not having a spirit of timidity, but being confident. Your confidence is not self-confidence, it is a confidence in something that God has already placed in you that is of seriousness, of weightiness, it's significant, it's something that you need. Enthusiasm, it's something that has got weightiness to it and something that's going to cause us to grow up.

If I say this to you, I don't want you to get the wrong impression of this because boldness also means showing a willingness to take risks and being confident in courage. It has a spirit of someone who's taking a risk that is saying, "I'm approaching the unknown." So, because it is unknown, I can't exactly tell you how this thing is going to turn out, because there is some measure of uncontrollability about it. There is some discomfort in the unknown here, but yet I do not allow the unknowns to prevent me from being brave and courageous.

Boldness says, "I'm going to do something that is a bit risky because I can't control everything that is going to be in front of me, but I am going to do it anyway," and so, it has a measure of that. In God, our only risk is to just step onto the water in faith. It's a faith thing that you just say, "I'm going there. I can't control all the elements that are going to come into my world, but as I walk by faith, but I'm going there anyway."

Hey, this is a season for us to grow up, to have enthusiasm, to go big, to have ambitious plans and to be significant in the way things are happening. It's also a season for us to be courageous and brave and not be worried that we have to control every last detail and allow God to go with us and to take care of it.

Let me go to Luke chapter 7. Again, this is the New King James version, but this is a different version of the story that I read to you. **¹Now when He concluded all His sayings in the hearing of the people, He entered Capernaum. ²And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear to him, was sick and ready to die. ³So when he heard about Jesus, he sent elders of the Jews to Him, pleading with Him to come and heal his servant. ⁴And when they came to Jesus, they begged Him earnestly, saying that the one for whom He should do this was deserving, ⁵"for he loves our nation, and has built us a synagogue." ⁶Then Jesus went with them. And when He was already not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to Him, saying to Him, "Lord, do not trouble Yourself, for I am not worthy that You should enter under my roof." (Luke 7:1-6 NKJV)**

I've read this to you already from the Luke version. I am just going to jump down to the Matthew version, and this is Matthew chapter 8. What I have already read to you, I am just going to skip over that. Here is where the big difference comes in. **⁵...The centurion came to Him.** In Matthew, the Bible says, **⁵Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him.** The previous version says that they sent elders to Him, to plead with Him, sent friends to Him. In this version, He says a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him. It is possible, and probable, that the centurion came with the elders and with the friends.

Saying, **⁶"Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented. And Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him."** Jesus said to him - you see the centurion was there, but he also had sent elders. You can see this, this delegation of elders, and the centurion is with Him. **⁸The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only**

9For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, "Go" and he goes; and to another, "Come" and he comes; and to my servant "Do this," and he does it. 10When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to those who followed, "Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such a great faith, not even in Israel! 11And I say to you, that many will come from the east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. 12But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go your way; and as you as you have believed, so let it be done for you." And his servant was healed that same hour (Matthew 8:5-12 NKJV).

I'm going to make a quick connection for you here. When I talked about Light and Darkness and about believing and unbelieving people, Jesus is making a reference here, to the very covenant people that were born under the covenant of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. And He's saying, **12But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. (Matthew 8:12 NKJV)** They will be cast into separate, away from the Light of God, whereas those that will **come from the east and the west, and will sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 8:11 NKJV)** He is making this comment on the back of someone that He says, "I've never seen so much faith in all of Israel."

In Jesus, He's making a statement here, that it is not about your current genetic birthright, that gives you access to the Kingdom of God. He is saying, it's your position in the Light, and in this Centurion, he had such Light of the knowledge of God, that He said, "If you are if you're walking here on behalf of God on the earth, then you have the authority to heal, no matter what, speak words, and my servant will be healed." Because it's obviously not you that's doing the healing. It's the God that you are here representing, that heals, and He is timeless, limitless, and His resources are everywhere, and His power is everywhere. So, just speak, and my servant will be healed.

Jesus is saying, this is the kind of faith, it puts you in the Light, this is the kind of faith that gets you results, this is the kind of faith that you walk in, that gives you confidence, that gives you boldness that causes you to go big. This man went against Roman rules, he imposed himself in Jewish tradition, he caused the Jewish elders and leaders to come and actually put their reputations on the line. He had boldness because he had shown that he had already started trusting in this living God, this God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He had put his money into building in the place of worship and when this God who was the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob showed up in his town, this living representative of God, he said, "Here is my chance to get something precious restored back to me and I am coming with boldness."

You understand that his boldness was not arrogant, his boldness was with humility and it was a humility understanding that the Person, the Being that he's addressing, has got the power. That's why the boldness I'm talking about and the bigness that I'm talking about it's not self confidence, it's knowing the Christ that is in us that will allow us to have faith to go into our future with bigness and with boldness.

I want to finish this, I want to just read to you The Passion Translation and The Passion Translation of this passage, I'm just going to read you three verses in the end, ¹⁰**Jesus was astonished when he heard this and said to those who were following him, “He (the centurion) has greater faith than anyone I’ve encountered in Israel! Listen to what I am about to tell you. Multitudes of non-Jewish people will stream from the east and the west, to enter into the banqueting feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in the heavenly kingdom.**

In the Heavenly Kingdom, you could interpret that and say, that is in Heaven, but he's not saying that. He's saying in the Heavenly Kingdom, the Kingdom of God. That is the Kingdom He was referring to, it's the kingdom on earth ¹²**but many Israelites, born to be heirs of the kingdom**, so these are Israelites that are born as heirs to the kingdom of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, which is why you can know when he refers to the Heavenly Kingdom, he is not referring to a future heaven, he's referring to the Heavenly Kingdom on earth, ¹²**will be turned away and banished into the darkness**, separation from the Light that has come, **where there will be bitter weeping and unbearable anguish.” (Matthew 8:10-12 TPT)**

People tend to see that as a prophetic end time scripture, but it was very much a here and now moment scripture about the Kingdom of God. Watch verse 13, ¹³**Then Jesus turned to the Roman officer and said, “Go home. All that you have believed for will be done for you!”** Go home, all that you have believed for will be done for you. **And his son was healed at that very moment. (Matthew 8:13 TPT)** I want to just have that phrase, **All that you have believed for, will be done for you!** Where? At your home, your place of your miracle is at your home, where you encounter Jesus. Your place of miracle is where you need it to be. Hallelujah.

I want to read to you, a passage of scripture, from The Passion Translation, and I'm going to finish the message with this, from Ephesians chapter 4 verse 7, ⁷**And he has generously given each one of us supernatural grace**, this is Jesus talking about the Gentiles, about the church, **according to the size of the gift of Christ**. So, the gift of Christ, is everything. This is why he says, ⁸**He ascends into the heavenly heights taking his many captured ones with him, and gifts were given to men.” (Ephesians 4:7-8 TPT)**

Skip a few verses, we go to verse 11, ¹¹**And he has appointed some with grace to be apostles, and some with grace to be prophets, and some with grace to be evangelists, and some with grace to be pastors, and some with grace to be teachers. ¹²And their calling is to nurture and prepare all the holy believers.** Who are you? You are a holy believer, ¹²**prepare holy believers to do their own works of ministry.** To do what works? Your works of ministry. ¹²**...and as they do this they will enlarge and build up the body of Christ. (Ephesians 4:11-12 TPT)**

So, if we're going to *Go Big*, and we're going to *Go Bold*, we're going to have enthusiasm, we're going to be ambitious, we're going to do things that are serious in nature, that are going to be expanding, large in the way that we go forward with things. We are going to be bold and courageous. This is about the grace of God, allowing your gift to have space to grow. Because without your gift growing, we can't actually do and become like Christ, you got to grow with us.

Whether we're going more on TV, whether we're going bigger in buildings, whether we're going greater in the different kinds of ministries that we're touching and affecting, and things that are happening in the new year. All of these things are designed to help you grow, to play to make a space for you to grow.

¹²These will enlarge and build up the body of Christ. ¹³These grace ministries will function until we all attain oneness in the faith. All of these ministries, that means the five-fold ministries, and your ministry working together, **¹³...until we all experience the fullness of what it means to know the Son of God and finally, we become one perfect man with the full dimensions of spiritual maturity and fully developed in the abundance of Christ (Ephesians 4:12-13 TPT).**

We cannot be fully developed in the abundance of Christ by building bigger buildings and having better sound and song or having better television programs, or having a bigger Bible School. It's not about the tasks and the buildings and the structures that we put together. Those things only are there to facilitate your growth, your gift growing to work in the ministry. If your gift is a giving gift of finances, it's meant to attract your gift, so your gift can grow so your influence can grow. So, your enthusiasm for making money and giving money can grow.

If your gift is to be a teacher, it's to create more places for you to teach and more teaching to be done. If yours is a gift of mercy and compassion, it is for you to have a space where your mercy and your compassion can work amongst the believers with a believer, so we can all grow together. So we have space and capacity to grow and grow and grow, so that we can be fully developed in the abundance of Christ. We need the abundance of Christ on the earth. When I say big, when I say "*Go Big and Bold*," God is saying to me, "I am wanting your full abundance of Christ in the earth and you got to *Go Big* in what you build in what you do so everybody's gift can grow in you and together, you become a fully abundant Christ." He needs us like that on the earth, now more than ever.

And so, **¹⁴And then our immaturity will end! And we will not be easily shaken by trouble, nor led astray by novel teachings or by the false doctrines of deceivers, who teach clever lies.** A clever lie is something that you are not, you don't know that it's a lie. He will teach lies, they actually teach lies, and they use the Bible to teach their lies. **¹⁵But instead we will remain strong and always sincere in our love as we express the truth.** As we're living together, as we're building together, as we are growing together, we will experience and we will always be sincere in our love, as we express the truth.

¹⁵All our direction and ministries will flow from Christ and lead us deeper into Him, the anointed Head of His body, the church. ¹⁶For His "body" has been formed in His image, and is closely joined together and constantly connected as one. That's you and me and us. **¹⁶And every member has been given divine gifts to contribute to the growth of all.** You have been given a divine gift to contribute to my growth. You have been given a divine gift to contribute to other people's growth. Why? So that we can have the fullness of the abundance of Christ. **¹⁶We have been given divine gifts to contribute to the growth of all; and as these gifts operate effectively throughout the whole body, we are built up and made perfect in love (Ephesians 4:14-16 TPT).**

I want to tell you something Church, we're heading in for a season, and this season of *Go Big and Go Bold*, is not just about building a space for the A-team and MiXchange interns to come in and have an encounter with God. This is the beginning of encounters for God. Because all of these people are coming to bring their divine gifts, they are going to discover what their divine gifts are that God has given them, that they can serve us and we can serve them. We can have a full generation across the generation gifts, activated, energized and brought into activation together, contributing to each other's growth, fully developing in the abundance of Christ together.

This big and boldness, yes, it does require buying more cameras and lenses. Yes, it's going to be having more musicians, and yes, it's going to be about creating an album. Yes, it's going to have things, more television time and all of these things, but these things are not just to promote me, it's not to give more space for my ministry. It's space for all of us to grow together, for all of us to come in the fullness of the abundance of Christ. As we do that, more and more people can come and enjoy this wonderful, exceptional love of God. We can grow together and have the fullness of the abundance of Christ in us, through us, around us, and let me tell you, wherever the light shines, darkness has got to go. Wherever the salt of the earth is, people are attracted because it makes flavour of everything that is around them. We bring flavour to the world, when we are the fully abundant Christ wherever we go. People will be attracted to the shining of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, in our unity, and in our expression of truth and the love of God, that we share amongst us.

Well, I trust that you have stayed with me this whole time. If you haven't, and you somehow got up, and went and made a cup of tea because you're at home, I want to ask you to watch this again and again. Download the transcription of this message, because this will be the foundation of everything we talk about in 2021, of *Going Big and Going Bold*.

May your days that are ahead, be filled with a revelation of Jesus Christ. May the peace of God rest upon you, may His anointing rest upon you. May the healing power of God come into your life in emotions, in your heart, in your physical body. May the glory of God surround you and just may His fullness of His love well up inside of you, that wherever you may be, whether you be beach, whether you be with families, whether you be at home, whether you are just enjoying some rest time, or doing some fitness things or whatever you're doing. I trust that you will encounter God already and that you will enjoy His presence, enjoy His fullness, enjoy the wonderful blessing of God in this season, before we get our engines revved up again for 2021.

I look forward to seeing you on Christmas morning, Christmas night. I look forward to seeing you on the two Sundays and indeed also on New Year's Eve. Thank you for joining me in Church and enjoy a sound and song as we close the service. May God bless you, in Jesus name.