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Beloved Part 18: Relationship Restoration - Honour, Faith and Finances
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Scripture Reference: Ephesians 2:6 (AMP); Ephesians 2:6 (MSG); Proverbs 3:8-10 (NKJV); Acts 22:6-8 (NKJV)

Hi y'all. How y'all doing, y'all? Y'all doing all right? Glad y'all good. Praise Jesus. I've been listening to Brother Jerry. I've been talking to them on the telephone. So, I'm kind of in 'y'all mode' y'all. Praise Jesus. Hallelujah. Glory to God. [Pastor John speaking in an American accent.]

Well, Pastor Sharon did such an amazing job this morning, and she really did an amazing... She created a platform, foundation for me to springboard off that. So I don't have to go over last week's message, I can just move on. Amen. Hallelujah.

I want to remind you though, before I move into my message, I want to remind you that Jesus loves everybody on the planet. He died for everybody on the planet. There is not a single person on the planet that was born, that is born, that will be born, that Jesus didn't die for, and that He doesn't love. Then there are those that receive Him as Lord and Saviour, they become His children. He has a different relationship with those that become His children. It's a fact. He has a different relationship because His Spirit lives in them. The other people that are born on the planet that have not received Him into their heart, He can't have a relationship with them, because they haven't received Him into their spirit. So, when you become born again, you have a different relationship. When you become born again, you have a different relationship, then your relationship can take on the form that you choose to press to God. The more you press into God, the more you have an understanding of how God works. The more you flow with how God works, the more your relationship grows, and so then you become a beloved one, a trusted one, where you are regarded as faithful, trustworthy. He reveals things to you that He doesn't reveal to others. This is the way the relationship works. So, it's all over the Bible. And so, that means that you're beloved and I've been sharing with you how honour and beloved go together. And if you're in honour then you are someone that is respected. There's a high regard. There's a high value. There's a high appreciation. There's a cherishing. Honour is something that is very beautiful, and it's life-giving when you observe it, when you live it, when you have it as part of your being. Honour is a very powerful force. It's a much greater force than anything else.

I will say, it's extremely difficult to live with honour, when you live in a worldview of right and wrong. Because the minute you take a position of 'I'm right', it's much more difficult to live with honour. Even though you may be right, it's difficult, more difficult to live with honour. I'm not saying it's impossible, but if you put you being right at the top of the list of what you stand for, then it's more difficult to live with honour, because being right becomes more important. And if for example, fairness and/or other value systems that dictate your life are that big in your world, then it's more difficult to live with honour. Oftentimes people can make a show of honour, but honour is not really honour until it's really tested. It's only when something happens that you disagree with the person that you honour, generally speaking, it's only something that happens that you disagree with, or that has the potential to hurt you,

or you may feel in your soul like you are hurt, or disappointed, or feel like it. The honour has not lived up to your expectation. What you have as honour towards someone else, and that someone else's relationship doesn't live up to your expectation, then honour is tested. Because now, it's only tested because now it's based on performance. It's based on fairness, it's based on your value systems. And so, then you have an assessment, and you measure the level of response, and then your measurement of response determines your position in honour, then it's not honour - it's based on your assessment. So then your assessment becomes the determining factor as to whether you walk in honour. Whereas honour goes beyond assessment, it goes beyond performance, it goes beyond all of those things.

I've had the privilege to watch probably some of the men that I'm connected to, that I've had the privilege of walking with and being around in their presence, in their person, watch the decisions they've made in their lives. It's been a privilege for me to watch honour at work that's not just words. It's a deep, deep, spiritual force that's at work. I'm grateful to God that He gave me a framework to understand relationships; touch, integration of ways, strategic intentions, divine productivity and covenant. And, of course, if you live in covenant, then you can only live in honour. You can't have covenant without honour, and you can't have honour without covenant.

So when God asked Abraham to give Him his only son, and effectively sacrifice him on the altar, it was because there was such an honour in Abraham's heart for God, that covenant was an obvious choice. Put another way, the covenant request was Abraham's honour. Without the two being together, he couldn't give his only son as a sacrifice. So there's a close relationship between those two.

As Pastor Sharon said, and to me this has become a great life altering perspective for many years, but the more you meditate on it, and the more you observe God at work in your life, and the more you see things happening, the more you begin to realise what's going on and the revelation gets bigger as you move on. It's from Ephesians; and so you know the scripture I've been giving is Ephesians 2, verse 6, **And He raised us up together with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:6 AMP)**. So we are seated together in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus. And I've read to you out of the Message translations, **Then he picked us up and set us down in highest heaven in company with Jesus, our Messiah (Ephesians 2:6 MSG)**. So, we know that we are seated in heavenly places with Christ Jesus, we are there in Him. We're not there in person because our bodies still live here. So we are there in Him.

If you read Ephesians chapter 2, and I encourage you to read all of Ephesians, but if you really read Ephesians 2, and you accept that you're in Christ because Christ is in you, and you are seated in Him in heavenly places, then you have to accept that the real you is not your body. The real you is the spirit man you where Jesus lives in you because you are seated in Him in heavenly places. That's the real you. The minute you begin to live as the real you, then you as the real you, have a whole different worldview. I've been talking to you about your worldview, and how your worldview is affected. Whatever worldview you have, it is affected by your culture, by your circumstances, by relationships. There are many things that affect your worldview, the way that you see life. So from before we were born, people have been hard at work creating a worldview. Well, because the enemy of God is the prince of the

power of this earth. He is the god of this world. He's is darkness and he has been at work to affect conversations, governments, the way money is utilised. He has been hard at work to make sure that people that get born into the earth are born into a set of circumstances, that they are influenced by him before they're influenced by God. Which is becoming much more evident now, as you look at what's happening very, very loudly in the American education system, where they are wanting to teach children as young as 6 and 7 years old about gender identity and gender sexuality. At 7 years old. This is not, I'm not telling you about a few fringe schools that are doing this. This is a move by the whole political spectrum and teacher spectrum in the United States of America to shift the worldview of people that are being born into the earth now, so that their worldview is already established by the time God is actually something that's real to them. The only people that can change that dynamic, are the people that are close to those children for the first part of their life; hopefully, that's their parents and hopefully those parents have some idea of what God wants.

For the most part parents, and I'm painting a very broad brush here, okay? I understand that. It's not everybody but it's the majority. The majority of Christians today fit God into their schedule. They fit God into their way of life. They fit God into their plans, and their ideas of what life looks like. They fit God in even though they are born again, they've given their life to Jesus, they understand they're going to heaven. They still live a life where they fit God into their life, rather than life fits into God's plan.

For the majority of Christians, there is a plan that you make for your life and then you ask God to bless it because that's what you do. That's what everybody does. So even those kids that are born into Christian homes, they are not born into a God-oriented lifestyle. They're born into a plans-oriented lifestyle that God must bless. They might even be brought up as children to pray for their food in the morning, pray for their breakfast, thank God for their day. They might even finish their day off, if there's a healthy family environment, they might even finish their day off with a Bible reading. They might start off their day with a Bible reading or a prayer over breakfast, they might finish their day. I'll tell you, this is very seldom that this happens anywhere on the earth at the moment, but it might be that way. They are still in an environment where they are geared towards plans that they have made that God must bless.

I suppose that's why God birthed you into the earth, right? So you could make all the plans that you thought were best for yourself? Huh? Come on, surely, God brought you into the earth so you can make as many plans as you wanted to make, and He didn't want to have anything to do with it. He just said, "Go ahead and do what you like." That's why you were born into the earth. "Go ahead and do what you like, call on Me and if you just call on Me occasionally, I'll be there for you. Don't worry. Make your plans, make your plans, make your plans. Call Me when you need Me and I'll just sprinkle a bit of blessing dust over you." Surely God called you to live like that?

No, of course not. He didn't birth you into the earth for that. He birthed you because He had a plan for you before you were even birthed. That's why He birthed you. He didn't have you coming to the earth because He had no plan for you. He had a plan for you. What's happened is that the enemy of God has tried to create an alternative

system so that when you get born into the earth, and because God is a God that must allow all of us to make a choice; He must allow you to make the choice of whether you're going to allow the system of the earth to influence you, and or, whether you will make a choice for Him.

So, "Pastor John, you and Pastor Sharon are teaching and preaching things that are really challenging to us." And well, they are challenging to us too. If you don't think that they are. I took a position with my own sons where they could have gone to a Christian school and I made a decision at that time that they ... If I could get through school and excel as a Christian in high school, primary school and high school, in a government school. I went to a boys only high school, one of the best schools in Johannesburg, as government schools go, called King Edward VII High School, in case you didn't know. Otherwise known as KES. They have a pretty good rugby team. They have a pretty good rowing team. They're a pretty good sporting school. People like Bryan Habana, for example, if you didn't know, came from KES. Just so you know. Just so you know. So I was at KES. I was persecuted for my faith at KES. I made it. Then I went into the army and I lived for Jesus in the army and I made it. And so when it came time for my boys to go to school, I said well listen, if I can make it and I had very difficult circumstances at home, the devil came after my family, my mom and my dad. I said, listen, if I can make it through all of that because of my revelation of Christ, if my boys grow up in a family environment where they're taught faith, certainly they've got a better chance of making it in that environment than I did because they got me anyway. I can stand right there with them and I'll walk right through the school with them. That was our choice and I've told you guys many, many times that if I could do it again, I would not make that choice. I would homeschool them. I would not subject them to that system. I would not do that because that system is not God's way of education. That system is a system designed by people that have come and gone in our world that have designed a worldview, that when you enter the system, the system already has an established worldview. So you come into a system where you must adapt yourself to the system. The system's not adapting to you. Right? You have to adapt yourself to the system. So what happens to your Christian faith? What happens to your walk with God? What happens to all of the stuff that you have? You've got to do what the system says you have to do. The system says you will get rewarded for hard work, you will get rewarded for intelligence, you will get rewarded for emotional intelligence, you will get rewarded for many things if you work the system right. So then it becomes about how well you work the system. Amen.

You are born into this way of thinking. I was born into that way of thinking. I had no choice. My parents sent me to a government school because they went to government schools. The difference though, is when my dad was in government school, they said the Lord's Prayer every morning at school and there was a strong Christian ethos that was, for the most part prevalent in schools. Now, you can't even use any god's name in vain, and someone's going to tell on you. Never mind just Jesus. Although that's probably the only god's name that you can swear with and they won't report you. But if you swore with any other god's name, they will report you. That's what the system has become. The system has been adapting to become more progressive because the more progressive nature of the system is to absorb your thinking, your talent, your potential, earlier and earlier and earlier, and take your way of thinking away from the way of thinking of your parents - who are the

custodians and helpers, to actually help make us progress together. So children are supposed to bring energy and honour and respect into the household. Parents are supposed to recognise the changes that are happening in society and together we are supposed to and designed as a community, we are supposed to orientate ourselves, according to the Word of God, to the changes that are happening in society. What's happening right now is that our society has become so dominated to - if I can just have my phone there, Sharon - I can run all of my entertainment. I can run all of my worldview choices. I can do everything on this thing [Pastor John is holding up his phone] and I can stand right next to Sharon, and we can be together and I can stand right next to her and we can be both on our phones. But we're together but I'm doing what I want to do and she's doing what she wants to do but we're together. So we're not really together anymore. We're still doing what we want to do.

The system has created a way of getting to our young people. Okay, but maybe you say that's not happening to my child at home because I'm managing this until they're 15, or whatever the time might be. But it's happening to every other child that your child is connecting to in the system and the system is already creating a culture that at some point, there's a connection. So when we talk about institutions, and we talk about systems, we are talking about all of the institutions of the world that have been established and created to reward the few with much and keep the many from reaching their potential because of financial reasons. Predominantly. Yes, and now I'm generalising. I know I'm generalising but this is the way of the way things work. It doesn't matter what government institution and ideology they have. Even capitalistic governments or governments that are based on capitalism as a broad anything, it's designed to reward choices. And it's designed to reward performance. And it's designed to reward those that maximise the way that the system works. From health, to education, to relationship, to government, to all of these things, every part of our lives - the enemy has been hard to work to bring us into a life of systematic choices that remove the God factor out of our lives. It promotes the personal choice factor. Amen.

“So, Pastor John and Sharon, you're saying some challenging things.” Well, I'm just trying to show you that it's challenged us as much as it's challenged you. Because it brings into our world, choices that we have made that we can't go back and fix. Things that have challenged our children that we can't go back and fix. We have to trust God now to fix it. They went through things based on our choices that I wish they never went through. Yeah. Praise the Lord. My sons had God encounters while they were still young and they continued to have God encounters. But it didn't stop the fact that they were exposed every day, all day, every day, all day, every day, all day to the system. And so, that system grinds you and wears you down. Because you only give God, normally most Christians, and again I'm painting in a broad brush here. Most Christians give God an hour or two a week, it's normally at church on Sunday. The system is actually impacting you 24/7. Even if you are having encounters with God every day at home, you better keep your mind on the ways of God during the day, otherwise the system is going to overwhelm you because the system is designed to do that.

And, when I spoke to you, and Pastor Sharon so well did that today. I don't want to ignore what I read to you in Proverbs chapter three. And I'm just going to read it from

verse eight. If you put the word around your neck, you bind it in your heart, ⁸ **It will be health to your flesh, And strength to your bones.** ⁹ **Honor the LORD with your possessions, And with the firstfruits of all your increase;** ¹⁰ **So your barns will be filled with plenty, And your vats will overflow with new wine (Proverbs 3:8-10 NKJV).** What God is saying here is He's giving us a way of being free from the system because we put Him first. This is already in the Old Testament. This is not something that Jesus preached in isolation or He preached it because He was God. This is already something God was teaching His people from early on. Even from Adam and Eve, to Noah, to Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob. He was teaching them, and to all the rest of the covenant people, "Choose Me, choose life, you will choose blessing. If you do not choose life, then you will have curses." How? It's not that you are cursed. It's that you're working in a system that is cursed. And so, the devil doesn't want us to talk about a system that is cursed because he doesn't want it to be exposed as a cursed system. You mean to say the system that we are working in every day is cursed? For sure. It is because when Adam fell, and so I've been around in the faith movement long enough to know that this question that I'm talking to you about now, was a big deal in our early exposure to faith, what some call 'the faith movement'. Because there was this whole question, if there was the first Adam who fell, what was the consequence of the fallen first Adam? The consequence of the first fallen Adam is the ground is cursed and you will have to work this ground by the sweat of your brow. Yes, that had never happened before. They were dependent only on their walk with God. They didn't know there was an alternative. Okay. Also, a woman would have to give childbirth with pain and with stress, she will be giving childbirth. Consequence of their choices. So then, when the second Adam came, which is Jesus, and He fulfilled all of what happened in the first Adam, people said, "Well, now, the ground is no longer cursed and women don't have to have pain in childbirth." I'm not going to talk against anybody's faith who believes that. But the system that we are talking about is cursed.

The only way you can be free of that system is to walk with God. So, if you have faith to have a child without labour or without the pain of labour, the anxiety of labour, then your faith will get you there, not the system. So, the question of whether God actually – whether Jesus reversed that or not is not a relevant question for me. The only thing for me is how do I see it, the way that God reveals it to me personally. So, I don't want to answer a theological question. I want a relational answer to my question. You understand? What Pastor Sharon was saying, you don't have to ask the question. I don't have to ask the question; did Jesus undo all of the curses – His death, the first Adam, the second Adam, did it reverse all of that kind of stuff? I don't have to answer that. It's my walk with God, where my faith is with God that will determine where I walk with God on everything. I don't have to ask that question. I don't have to answer it. And that is what happened with Isaac and why I was talking about Isaac because in his natural mind and everybody else around him, their whole issue was, it's famine. You don't do anything when it's famine. There is no rain to water your seed. But God had said, "I will bless you in the land that I give you." So, if you live in the land with the blessing of God, then you do whatever you would normally do, because God's blessing is there. The Bible says he reaped a hundredfold return in that same year. That is supernatural increase. God was very specific with Isaac, because He said, "Don't go to the system which is Egypt that has all of the answers for you. Stay with My system and I will show you what I can do." All I can say is; praise God for that.

I have an answer to a very broad question you're already asking. I know it is a broad answer, but it is an answer nevertheless. "Pastor John, you are teaching about a system of living with Jesus and living in the Word that is completely different to what I see everybody else in the world is doing, and I see most other Christians are not doing. In other words, they are not putting God first place like you are teaching. I see most other Christians doing what everybody else in the world is doing. And so, Pastor John, where does that leave me?" Well, my answer to your question is, do whatever your faith allows you to do and live according to your revelation and your faith, not mine. I can teach you what God wants you to hear but I can't take you to where God wants you to be. That is a place you have to get to. Amen.

I have admitted to you and I continue to admit to you that we as a church have no real reference point really yet, as a church what it will look like, for us to have a full revelation of seated in Christ in heavenly places that if we all lived that way with that knowledge, and that understanding, what that would do to our worldview. But I have been on a journey. Can everybody say this with me; journey [Congregation repeats]. We're all on a journey, right? We're all on a journey, so, because we're on a journey, I can't determine – because your journey to this point is a very different journey to where my journey is. But Pastor Sharon gave you a very wonderful example by reading Kenneth Hagin's book and reading his story of his journey where he was subject to a church governing financial system where people were not tithing, people were not giving and people were not doing this. Remember when Brother Hagin was preaching in the early years of his ministry – in the early years of his ministry people had come through a depression – the Great Depression. This was not just a recession or a depression, this was the Great Depression. This was people starving to death-depression - the late 1930's or the early 1930's. And then by the late 1930's, the World War came. Not only did they live through depression, but they lived through a World War that impacted everybody's lifestyle and ability to live for decades. So when Kenneth Hagin was writing that book, he was writing in a society, a culture that had come from depression. Nobody wanted to let go of their money. Especially not to preachers of which many were charlatans - trying to make a living from something that God didn't call them to because any way to earn a buck is a way to earn a buck. Stay with me. So I'm just giving you the context that when God spoke to Brother Hagin and said, "Now, you don't ask Me for money, you claim your money. And you tell the devil to take his hands off your money and then you send angels, - the ministering spirits - angels, messengers that are sent by God to aid us and assist us. You send them to go and get your money." You need to understand that there was a context that this was spoken in of famine for a preacher. He was living in famine as a preacher when God gave him that revelation and his famine days ceased. His days of famine ceased.

You know, when we sit here now in 2022, reading something that he wrote where God gave him a revelation in the 1950s, when people were still coming out of all of the turmoil and everything else like that. You know, we kind of sit and we receive it with our current circumstantial mindset. I need to give you some context of how Brother Hagin had to receive that. His revelation still applies to us today because it's a spiritual principle. Now, if you've seated with Christ, in Christ, in heavenly places, what is your worldview about money, about provision? What is your worldview about relationships? What is your worldview about the way that you operate and interact

with the system? Institutions, government, economics, education, entertainment, many different things? If you're seated in Christ, how would you interact with the system? I mean it's a fair thing to say, you should read the New Testament - Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John - you should read those books because they talk about and have letters in red, meaning they actually wrote words that Jesus spoke.

You should go and read those scriptures and then read them with a view that says; I'm seated with Jesus now, Who paid the price for all of what He did and how He interacted with the system. Remember, when Jesus was born, just to remind you, Jesus was born under a Roman Empire. Some rich guys that followed the star, they had a way of life that they understood the cosmos, and they understood certain things. God used them and they came from a far journey because they were led by God. They came from a far place and they came with their wealth and they came to Herod, who was the king of Israel. They came to Herod and they said, "We have been informed that a King has been born and we have come to pay homage to the King, a new King that has been born." Herod is sitting there saying, "But I'm the king. If another king has been born that's going to take my throne, I've got to take Him out." Hello. You think that system hasn't changed?

The King Jesus that has been born in you, is a threat to the kingdoms of this world. They will do anything they can to stop the King Jesus in you from being released because the King Jesus in you, the Messiah, the Risen One is more powerful than any of their power that they've got available to them, no matter how big their system. Jesus is bigger than them. Herod tried to take Jesus out while He was still a child. The only way he could do it was, "I can't find this King." Well, he actually said to them, "When you find Him, come and tell me so I can also pay homage." Meaning, I will pay Him a visit and take out His kneecaps and separate every part of His body from Himself so He can never be King. And so they were warned by an angel not to go and do that and so they left, never went back to Herod. They came to do what God wanted them to do; provide wealth before Jesus even knew what wealth was. He sent kings from afar to come give wealth to a King that was just born, that no one knew was going to be a King, so that He never needed money ever in His life. That's how much money they gave Joseph and Mary. You think God is not going to take care of you like that? But Herod, he's still intimidated that there's a King that has been born. The fact that Herod could not intimidate these powerful men that came from a far place will show you how much power they had because this was the Roman Empire. Herod, you never disobeyed a leader of the Roman Empire. That was not done. They came after you with legions of men, if you didn't submit to what they said. The fact that these guys left without even going back to Herod, will tell you how much power they had. How much strength they had that Herod was not prepared to take his army and go and fight them. "You guys didn't tell me." He was much more interested in using his military might to kill every Jewish male born child under the age of two. And they went from house to house literally slaughtering every male child that was born because the King had been born that was a threat to an earthly king.

You think the world system doesn't think we're a threat? We're only a threat when we are extreme. Extreme in our revelation and our understanding of what God can do to a completely extremely committed believer. Amen. Hallelujah.

And so those of you, young people that have been listening to me, preach on kingdoms, and particular the kingdom of Babylon, all the kings and Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, on all of those things that I've been ministering to you on. And all of the things about kingdoms. If you have the wisdom of God and the understanding of God, you will end up outliving any kingdom because God will show you how. God will show you how. Hallelujah.

God wanted me to show you a very personal choice about how this happens. I can't take you where you are supposed to be. I can only teach you what you need to know. Only the Holy Spirit can take you where you need to be and how you respond to the Word of God and allow Him to reveal things to you. If you take the Word of God, and you push back against the Word of God, and you say, "No, this is not for me," then I can't help that, or, "I will do this in my own time of development." And then you use this as an excuse. I've done that, even in my physical training and my physical exercise. You know, I'll just train a little bit and I'll ease into it. I'll develop at my own strength. And so then if I have a personal trainer, of which my son, thank God. He is my personal trainer. He comes and he makes me do things. Almost every time I tell him, he's paying me back for all the hidings he got when he was young because he makes me do sit-ups. But he's like, "No, no, your back like this. Shoulders, come on. Come on, Dad. Come on, Dad. Push it now, push it." And my stomach is shaking and shaking. "Hold." Those of you who know him, "Hold, hold." And then he counts, "Five," and then he talks a bit, and, "Four." And then he talks a bit and he's still telling you to hold, hold. And now you're not just shaking a little bit, your whole body's shaking like this. And he says, "Hold." I can tell you this, that I would not be pushing myself to that limit if there wasn't a trainer that was saying, "You can go further." Because your body's screaming at you, don't. And it's the same with the way that we operate in the Kingdom of God. I've got to push. God has got to come into a messenger to push you further, otherwise you won't go there. Which is why we are where we are now with these messages because God is pushing us further. Praise the Lord.

When we come back next session, I'm going to talk to you a little bit more details about Mary and Martha. Because I want to talk to you about the Martha-syndrome, and the Mary choices. So you can either be subject to the system and its institutions, meaning the Martha-syndrome. Or if you are a Martha, you can choose to have the Mary anointing come on you and you can receive it by faith. If you are a Mary, then you need to continue to stay in the position that Mary stayed in because there's a place that can't be taken from you, by anybody or any system. If you're a Martha, then any way that the system works around you will affect you because that was her whole reason for talking to Jesus, because she said, "Lord."

So that's where I'm going to pick up. When we meet after lunch. I'm going to pick up with, "Lord." She called Him, "Lord." She called Him, "Lord." She went with her Martha-syndrome, performance mentality. She went with her cultural influence, the system of religion, which was closely connected to the system of education for the Jewish people. Education, governance, social culture, all of the things that we're all together, were impacting Martha's choice to serve, to be worried about many things.

So she goes to someone that she knows to be Lord, and tells Him what He must do for her. You can continue to flow and continue to operate in the Martha-syndrome or

you can embrace, say, “I recognise I am a Martha, my mentality has been a Martha mentality. The way that I've gone about my walk with God has been a Martha walk with God. But I choose the Mary anointing. I'm not there yet, but I can get there. If I choose it.” Don't say, “This is what I am and this is where I'll stay.” Because then you're effectively saying, “I'm only going to ever be what the system permits me to be.”

I don't care how big you dream, you're always going to go to the Lord and ask Him to affect you. You're not going to go and sit at His feet, and hear what He has to say to you. Well, I'm giving you the end game here, just as I'm closing. I'm going to give you the end game and I'm going to take you to Acts chapter 22 verse 6 This is the Apostle Paul and he's talking about his encounter with God or this is the account of him having an encounter with God. ⁶ **Now it happened as I journeyed (Acts 22:6 NKJV).** Will everybody, please say this word with me; journey. [Congregation repeats after Pastor John] We are all on a journey. Right? So none of us should judge anybody else as to what their lifestyle is now, or what they are being. We are all on a journey. And as revelation comes to us, we need to accept for ourselves that this revelation can change me. Amen. Praise the Lord.

I have many things that I want to share with you and I will by the leading of the Holy Spirit. Some of them may come out this weekend on Sunday at church on Sunday morning. If I'm going to do it, I'm going to do it on Sunday morning this weekend, otherwise I'm going to wait for another weekend. But we'll just see how the Holy Spirit leads us. But Pastor Sharon did something by the leading of the Holy Spirit this morning, which I'm just going for a moment, I'm going to leverage again. I'm just going to say; Ester, you did pretty well at school, right? How many distinctions did you get? All of your subjects? What is that? Six distinctions, eight distinctions? She had eight distinctions. But God did something in your heart that you knew and you began to sense that God was drawing you to Himself and so you made a decision that actually what you learned out of the system has no patch on what God was placing in your heart. So you actually didn't have any, you don't have me influence you. You didn't have mom and dad influence you. Maybe Miranda's encounter with God where God called her, maybe that had an impression on you. Now that you look back at that moment, you didn't see it that way, now that you look back, God used that as a seed into your life. But certainly with the kind of qualifications that you got, you could manage the system any which way you wanted to. But there was a bigger thing going on in your heart and that was that God was drawing you. Actually, it was such a strong pull, that you couldn't help but respond to God. Right? I mean, because He was pulling you.

However, there was something that you could do to change that pull? You could start to argue with the pull. Right? And I'm sure there were moments when you did? I mean, I don't know. But I mean, I assume most people, the head will have an argument with the heart. The pull says, “I must follow God.” The head is saying, “But look what I can become because of what I've achieved at High School.” [Ester responds to Pastor John] So He kept pulling you. He wouldn't let you alone. He kept pulling, kept confirming, “You got to follow Me, you got to follow Me.” So actually, what does it mean that the system has such a high approval rating of you? I'm using these words on purpose. What does it mean that the system has such a high approval rating of you because actually you're free from whatever they think about

you? Because God captured your heart, the system has nothing to say about it. Well, I'm sure if you had people talking to you about what they think you should do, maybe there's a lot of people that would have an opinion that says, "If you've got eight distinctions, you got some smarts." For me to try and get a distinction was a mission. I got a distinction at the end of standard nine in science and it was like the greatest achievement of my life. You know. Just one and I didn't get it in matric, I just scraped through in matric. I just wanted to play sports and be at church, you know. I always looked at people like Ester and thought, where did these people come from? What planet do they live on? You know?

Anyway, I mean, it doesn't matter what the world thinks about her. God captured her heart. So now, who's got say over her life? Tell me who's got say over her life? Me? I've got no say over her life. She will say to you, to me, "No, Pastor John. I know that you hear from the Lord and I will hear what you have to say." But I make it very clear that I will only confirm something that God is putting in your heart. I'm not going to be the voice of God to you. You got to hear from God yourself. Otherwise, our relationship becomes an unhealthy relationship. It gets out of the order of God. Unless God is on my case about something, I have to act, I've got to speak and I have to speak for God. Then I have no issue saying, "I'm now speaking for God because God told me to say." Then when I do that, I have the absolute confidence that I know what I'm talking about and that it doesn't matter how you receive it, it doesn't matter what you think about it, it doesn't matter what it ends up being or not being - I have to speak. When that happens, I speak and I speak with boldness and confidence, but with also humility and understanding of who I'm delivering the message to. Come on.

And so, but God's captured her heart, and so the system has now nothing more to say. Nothing more to say. The reason I'm talking about Ester for the moment is because, I, Paul, ⁶ ... **I journeyed and came near Damascus at about noon, suddenly a great light from heaven shone around me.** ⁷ **And I fell to the ground...** (Acts 22:6-7 NKJV). What happened to Paul? A great light, he was just walking to Damascus, at noon. That means the brightest time of the day where the sun is the highest and the brightest. At noonday, a bright light comes on him. You understand that this light is brighter than the sunshine light, otherwise, he wouldn't have known. God didn't wait until it was three o'clock where there could be shadows. He hit him, noonday. Why noon? So there could be absolutely no doubt in the humanity of Paul that this was a God encounter. Noonday, the light is brighter than the sun. God encounters Paul. His name was Saul then. ⁶ ...**shone around me.** ⁷**And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?'**(Acts 22:6-7 NKJV). But Jesus was dead. Jesus is saying, "You're persecuting Me." But Jesus was dead. "But you're persecuting Me, Saul." But Jesus was dead. "You're persecuting Me, Saul." I don't know if you're getting this. "You're persecuting Me, Saul." But Jesus was dead. How do you persecute someone who's dead?

You see, Saul didn't believe that Jesus was God. He thought Jesus was a prophet that brought a cult. And when He died, He died and all of these people that had followed this cult leader that was now dead, must be eradicated. "Why are you persecuting Me, Saul, who you think is dead? I am alive, Saul, and I am meeting you at noonday with My brightness of My glorious being. And who are you persecuting

that is still alive? The church. The church is Me and Me is the church. Why are you persecuting Me, Saul?"

"Well, can I answer in a court of law God?" You don't have that response when the bright light of God shines upon you. You have the response that Paul had. ⁸ **So I answered, 'Who are You, Lord?'**(Acts 22:8 NKJV). Remember, he fell to the ground. He fell to the ground. That's what happens when you have an encounter with God. Your immediate reaction is, "I am nothing in the presence of this glorious encounter. I am nothing." Because God is so great. God is so awesome. That's what happened to Ester. What happened to Ester was, "It doesn't matter how many distinctions I have. It's irrelevant because that system is not what's pulling me. What's pulling me is, God has got my heart, and I can't do anything but follow Him."

I'm so glad that Pastor Sharon spoke to Stefnie and Bertus because Stefnie and Bertus, thank God that they did not stand in her way and say, "No, come on, you got eight distinctions. We are insisting you must go to university. You must go and do something with these eight distinctions." They didn't allow that to happen. They let her follow God. But what are people going to say? I mean you know; she was supposed to be head girl at the school, but COVID happened. I mean, "What are all my friends going to say?" Some of her friends followed her here. She had an opportunity just a couple of weeks ago to go back to the school with Pastor Garth and go and minister, and all of the kids that knew her from Grade 10, some of the kids, Grade 10, some of the kids they came to talk to her because now her light is shining because God's got her, not the system.

And there are more people that you think, that are desperate to get rid of this heavy weight of the system that is on their shoulders of performance and expectation. Pastor Sharon said it exactly right, "What are you doing? Where are you going? What's your... what, what, what, where, how?" And all of that stuff gets designed by the system. All of those questions, all those people's stuff is designed by the system to capture your future. God captured her heart before her intellect captured her future. Hey, Mia? [Mia: Yes, Pastor John]. ⁸ **So I answered, 'Who are You, Lord?' And He said to me, 'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.'** (Acts 22:8 NKJV).

I will tell you this, an encounter with Jesus will change everything in your life. It changes everything in your life. I can't say that I had eight distinctions. But I can tell you what I did have, was when I was seven years old, and had an encounter with the Holy Spirit, who knocked me flat on the second row of my father's church and I began to speak in tongues, and He touched my life when I was seven years old. And still today, it marks me because I had an encounter with God that was an unquestionably irreversible encounter that I had with Almighty God. And then He came and He showed up in my room when I was 15, on my 15th birthday. He came and He showed up in my room and for three hours He called me into the ministry. I don't care what anybody says about me or about the system or about anything else. Nobody can reverse that encounter that I had with God. It's too late. He's too real to me. Too real to her [Pastor John pointing to Ester]. Many of them, [Pastor John pointing to the MiXchange group], have had those same encounters. He's become too real to them, doesn't matter what the system says anymore. Thank God for that. Thank God for that. So, when we come back, we're going to talk about broken

institutions, the broken institutions that we think that we should follow and how Martha-syndrome cooperates with the broken institution, to authenticate to the broken institution, so that it doesn't look broken. And how Mary's that come and sit at the feet of Jesus are the only people that can reveal a broken system. And that's why when you understand that the financial institution, the economies of the world, the financial institutions, and the financial system are broken. It has not got the capability of fixing your future. It's a broken system. Then you don't want to be a Martha in a broken system. You want to be a Mary that can change the system.

We have one hour and then we'll be back. Are you getting something out of this today? Hey? Hallelujah. Glory to God. I'll see you after a bite to eat or whatever you're going to do. Do we have something to eat out there? Tomorrow? Oh, that's for lunch tomorrow? Now you're going to have to take care of your lunch today. We're doing foot in a message tomorrow after church, so you got lunch in between, we give you lunch something to eat. Amen.