## 03 February 2023 Highest Level Conference Part 1 Pastor John Bendixen and Reverend Joe McCroskey (WTB)

Scripture Reference: 1 Corinthians 2:1-2 (KJV); 1 Corinthians 2:2-7 (NKJV)

Pastor John Bendixen:

Well, look at you all, aren't you the hungry ones? Praise the Lord. Grobbies says, starving. I don't think I've seen Grobbies starve, ever, but anyway. I'm glad you're starving, Grobs. Hallelujah. Glory to God. It's a good day. Praise the Lord. Thank you. I need you to give me, when I've done 40 minutes, I need you to give me a 5-minute warning, please, Empie. Praise Jesus.

We thank You, Lord, for this session this afternoon that as the Word is proclaimed and we are ready to receive the Word that we will be ready to hear, ready to flow and ready to change. Hallelujah. Glory to God. Right now, we put everything that has been plaguing us, worrying us, hindering us, distracting us; we put it behind us and we're ready to focus on what God wants for us. Amen. So, come on, let's do something and let's just go like this. [Pastor John shaking his arms] Shake it off, just shake it off. Loosen up those shoulders, just shake it off. I'm not going to have all that stuff on me, I'm free. I'm free. The clutter of my mind is gone and I am ready to receive the Word. yeah, Anke wants to do this all day [Pastor John laughs]. Praise the Lord.

If you can go with me in your Bibles, if you don't have a Bible you should have a Bible. You can go to first Corinthians chapter two, please. So, we are going to be experiencing over the next couple of days, we are going to be experiencing what God has got for us, through a thing called words. I mean, I'm being very simplistic about this but I can stand here with all of the anointing as I want to; it has got to be transmitted. Words are a way that it gets transmitted. Certainly, laying on of hands is another way, sometimes the anointing of God, the presence of God can come so strong on a person's body that just the anointing on a person's body can come into an auditorium and can affect people in any place, anywhere; you need to remain open to that, yeah.

You know, we could get down from the pulpit here and walk around and the anointing can be so strong that it can hit you and impact you and things can happen to your body because the anointing is here. Hallelujah. It doesn't happen as much as laying on of hands happens and people are more ready to receive the anointing through the laying on of hands, it's just a norm that has happened in the church. But people receive more because there are more 'norms' to the words that are spoken.

The Apostle Paul, he writes and he says that - let me just get here in this version of the Bible. He says; <sup>1</sup> And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. <sup>2</sup>For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified (1 Corinthians 2:1-2 KJV). So, he didn't come in the excellency of speech. He came with a determination and his determination was, "I didn't want to come in the wisdom of things that people say, I'm coming in the power of God - nNot the excellence of words and the excellence of speech."

I'm going to read this to you out of The Passion Translation, it says, <sup>1</sup> My brothers and sisters, when I first came to proclaim to you the secrets of God, I refused to come as an expert, trying to impress you with my eloquent speech and lofty wisdom. <sup>2</sup> For while I was with you I was determined to be consumed with one topic—Jesus, the crucified Messiah (1 Corinthians 2:1-2 TPT).

He wasn't interested in how well he could speak, how well he could inspire people with his speech, or as some people would refer to... Those days, people would go around, showing how eloquent they could speak and impress people in the market space, in the square. They would stand and debate and show people how excellent they could speak. So he said, "I'm not coming to you with the excellency of speech. I'm coming to you with the power of God."

I want to for a moment, just focus on that word, determine, because it's very important in terms of how this scripture is going to play out for us today, and setting a platform for us for the rest of the time that we are together. Because you don't want to hear Brother Joe, who's going to speak after me this afternoon, or the speakers tomorrow, tonight Brother Jerry and other speakers. You don't want to hear any of us speak as experts. Right? We are not here because we are experts. We are here because we have a walk with God, we are called by God, and we are called to bring a message from God. So that's why we are here. We are not here as experts. Amen.

Well, you know, if you're an expert, then it means that you are trading on a knowledge base that you assume, a higher ground than anybody else has. And so, you give yourself as; I've got more knowledge on the subject than anyone else has. Well, I don't want to be in a position where I'm showing myself off like that because my job is not to show myself off. My job is to show Jesus off. It's to reveal His power, it's to demonstrate His power, and for Him to do the work in you. Amen. I know the people that are with me that are going to be speaking over the whole weekend, none of them, including Brother Jerry, wants to show himself as an expert. He's here to come and speak on how God will touch you and glorify and elevate Jesus. Yeah. We're all here because of Jesus, not because we are experts. Hallelujah.

I think that there are too many so-called experts in the church that earn a salary because they are experts. Well, there can't be too much glory in that because that's not what Jesus called us to do. Paul, the apostle, is making this very strong emphasis; "I'm not coming to you as an expert. I am determined." So that word, determined is to decree something, or to judge, or to esteem something. So, if he says, "I come and I determine – I'm not pre-judging something, I am not coming with an estimation of myself or anybody else or putting my words as esteemed. I'm not esteeming my words. I am also not calling into question your place or where you find yourself. What I am doing is, I am elevating Jesus Christ and Him crucified. I am elevating Jesus. I'm raising up Jesus. I'm raising Him high. I'm putting Him on the highest level. I'm putting Him on the maximum place, the highest level. I am not raising myself up to the highest level, I am raising Jesus up to the highest level. I am not raising up my own words to the highest level, I'm raising up Jesus's words to the highest level." Hallelujah.

So, I am not here to pick out anybody, that's what that word *determine* means. I am reading from the Greek here, I am reading what the Greek word means. I am not

here to pronounce an opinion – it's the direct translation of this Greek word, to pronounce an opinion or to decide what is right and wrong – merely to raise Jesus. So, I am not coming with words that can be weighed up and judged as to whether they raise to the highest level or not. I am coming with the power of Jesus and He is the One that determines what happens. Hallelujah.

Everything that we are going to be doing in this next couple of days, is that we are going to be raising up Jesus. He says - if I continue to read - I am reading now from the New King James Version, <sup>2</sup> For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified (1 Corinthians 1:2 NKJV). So, I am not here to judge you, esteem or condemn or raise up anything other than Jesus Christ and Him crucified. I want us to be in a place of readiness, to understand that all the messages that are going to be declared, all the words that are going to come out off this platform over the next couple of days, that we position ourselves that we don't elevate one set of words above another set of words. But we receive the Word of God that might come through any vessel for us. Because the power of God can be coming through a vessel in a way that may be unexpected. Ja, maybe unexpected. Somebody could say something and you might say, "Well, you know, Brother Jerry is the senior apostle here. He is the leader that is amongst us and we all recognise him to be that." He is the senior apostle of this church. We receive him as that in our lives, and so everybody might say, "We are waiting for him to talk." Meantime God has elevated someone else's message, another word that might come through someone else to speak directly to you. So, we are not coming through the eloquence of speech, but through the power of the Holy Spirit. He can come to you in any way, any time, any how. Any moment He can touch you. Hallelujah. Praise the Lord.

He says, <sup>3</sup> I was with you in weakness, in fear and in much trembling (1 Corinthians 2:3 NKJV). What? You know, this is the Apostle Paul. How is it possible that he says, "I come to you in weakness, in fear and in much trembling?" Why would he put himself in that place? Well, he understood that without the anointing of God and the power of God on his words, he would just sound like any other preacher, or any other person speaking in the public square. He didn't want to come and stand as a messenger of the Most High God and just sound like anybody else in the public square. He wanted to make sure that he was coming in fear of God, in trembling, understanding that he came with a message from God and needed to deliver it for God. Praise Jesus.

<sup>4</sup> And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power (1 Corinthians 2:4 NKJV). I have ministered this from this platform before; this is not necessarily gifts of the Spirit at work through the laying on of hands or the word of wisdom, or the word of knowledge, or the gifts of the Holy Spirit. But there is a power that comes with words that is the demonstration of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes when those words come out, they can cut your heart. They penetrate deep into your heart and you get, sometimes, if this is the way God needs to deal with you or with me, sometimes we will feel convicted. You will feel, "Ahh, you know what, I need to clean up something here. I've got to fix this thing that I've got going on here." Maybe it's an attitude, maybe it's a mindset, maybe it's a position that you have with God where you're saying, "I'm not sure that I'm ready to give my all to God. I'm not ready to do this or I'm not ready..." The Word of God can come with such power that when the

preaching comes with that power, it gets in there like a sword - that's what the Word of God is, by the Holy Spirit – it's a sharp sword and it gets right in there and it starts to divide and cut what's your soul and what's spirit and it begins to make it work there. That's the power of the Word. You can't do that with clever speech. You've got to do that with the power that's on words. Hallelujah.

He goes on and he says, 4 but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God (1 Corinthians 2:5 NKJV). As we go through this period of time, we do not want to be in a place where we are relying on the wisdom of men that comes from this pulpit but in the power of God as the words come from this pulpit. We're trusting in the power of God. Hallelujah. To be sure, there is no Sunday or any other time that I get up here that I know that I'm standing in my communication skills. So bear with me for a minute. I am a pastor and I have a gift to teach. You know, Brother Joe and I were talking just yesterday, late afternoon, I think Joe. You were just talking to me about how there has been an anointing on this ministry to educate people, to teach people. Some 8 000 people later that have gone through our Bible School will testify to that. Over 20 years we've been running Bible School under the mantle of Jerry Savelle Ministries and Jerry Savelle as our apostolic leader and Jerry Savelle as our chancellor of this Bible School. We've been doing this for 20 years. This month, perhaps even to the week, 20 years ago, we ran our first Bible School class. Hallelujah. Praise the Lord. This 8000 people count is only the people that we've done in Heritage of Faith Bible Institute, that's not counting all the stuff, all the people we've touched through the Bible School we do with Brother Jerry's material into the rest of Africa, and even around South Africa. Who knows how many people we've touched? I mean, last year, we graduated, how many? 3000, 3200? Something like that, 3200 people just in Malawi alone. Hallelujah.

So I could stand here and I could say to you, you know, I have a communication skill, I can communicate and I can teach. So, I'm going to stand here, and I'm going to teach you. Well, what I would be immediately doing is I would be coming to you with eloquent speech. The minute I do that, I'm operating in my gifting, not in my calling. There are a lot of people that operate in their gifting. Business people, I mean I've seen it happen, business people that are called to pastor; they know how to work with people. It is possible, I'm just going to touch on this for a minute; if you go to someone who's in the human resource department and they know how to, and they are the human resources director or manager or something like that, there is a good chance that God originally called them to be a pastor because they have a heart for people. It's quite possible that their gifting has placed them in a corporate position somewhere and they're using their gifting in business. It might be that God has actually gifted them to be in the ministry but they wouldn't know because they're not giving themselves to God. I can stand and operate in the gift but I'd rather operate in the call because the gifting is accelerated in the call, it has power when you're called. Gifting just releases eloquence. Hallelujah.

I am gifted by God to communicate. My communication and I've shared this with the young people, often my communication would be subtle communication and actually draw a response out of you because I can go like [Pastor John leaning forward with his hand on his ear] and you go [Congregation: Yes.] [Pastor John continues to lean forward with his hand on his ear] You go what? [Congregation says, "Yes."] And you

say? [Congregation says, "Amen."] Say what? [Congregation says, "Amen."] And again? [Congregation says, "Amen."] I'm communicating to you. You see, because if I'm looking for a response, I can communicate not just with words, I can communicate with you. Yeah? Because if God has gifted me, then I am, part of my gifting would be to be able to communicate with people because I can understand people. How can I be a pastor if I don't understand people? Come on. I need to understand people. I need to have a passion for people. I need to have time for people. I also need to be in a position where if people need help in their life, I'm ready to step in and help them. Amen.

So, one day I was coming into Witbank and as I was arriving in Witbank at the Watermeyer off ramp from Johannesburg, I got this phone call from a family. Unfortunately, they're no longer part of our church, but at the time, that family was having some troubles with the son in the home. And that son was on a depressive mad rampage in his house. His father was physically fighting him. He was about 24 years old at the time, his father must have been about 50, maybe somewhere around there. Of course, a 24 year old boy, young man that's on a rampaging rage, wrestling with his father, at some point in time, his father's energy is going to run out quicker than his son's energy is going to run out. And he was at that point. When I got a phone call from his mom, because he wanted into the gun safe, he wanted the gun and he wanted to shoot himself. He was on a mad rampage in the house, destroying things.

I immediately went straight to the house. I walked into the room and asked, they were still wrestling on the bed, and I asked the mother, "Where is the safe?" She said, "The safe is there in that cupboard." So I just went and I stood in front of the safe. The father was perspiring and he was, you know, in bad shape. He said, "Thank you, Pastor John, for arriving when you did, because I'm done. Physically, I couldn't keep him off anymore." You know? Well, you could say, well, he should have smacked the son. Well, maybe the son would have smacked him back and then you escalate violence, you know. So, unless you know how to hit someone, don't. You know? Because if you're going to hit him, especially if he's in a rage, you better hit him real hard and real heavy, so that he doesn't get up because if he gets up in that rage, you've made things a lot worse. I don't know how much the father was thinking about that. But thank God, he was just wrestling. They weren't trading blows.

Anyway, I just went and stood in front of the safe, and I said, "You can stop now. You can leave it to me". And so the son, he was looking at me and he was crazy mad. He said, "Get away from that safe, get away." I said, "No." I said, "No." I said, "I'm not moving here. In the name of Jesus, I will not move and you will not touch this gun in the name of Jesus." He stood there looking at me and he was raging. He was assessing how he could get me. I said, "In the name of Jesus, in the name of Jesus." The next minute, he turned around and he grabbed the sound system that was a very expensive sound system. He just wrecked it. He grabbed the mirrors, he broke the mirrors. He just went crazy in that room. But he didn't come near me.

You see, I wasn't using eloquent words to persuade him to stand down. I was there in the power of the Holy Spirit with few words. The power of the words was in what the Holy Spirit brought to the room, the name of Jesus brought to the room, it was not in eloquent words. You see, you could have any kind of eloquent words in that

kind of situation and it means what? That rage was, it was demonically orchestrated rage. And only someone who understood who they were in the power of the Holy Spirit, in the power of the name of Jesus, could stand there with authority and say, "I'm not moving." It doesn't matter how strong you are, it doesn't matter what rage you bring to the table, the Name that is above every name is stronger than your rage. Hallelujah.

And so what happens if I had come in, in some kind of eloquent words, he would have swatted me. Maybe I would have wrestled him for a couple of hours, couple of minutes, who knows? It might have escalated in violence because he might have felt more threatened because there's another man in the room. Who knows what might have happened. But thank God for the Name of Jesus. After he had finished raging, he went and he sat on the edge of the bed. I went and I sat next to him and I put my arms around his shoulder, my one arm around his shoulder, and I called him by name and I said to him, "Now we're going to start walking together and your life is going to change. We're going to find some solutions for your life." One of the things that caused him to get into such a rage was fear. He had fear of the future. He had fear that he wasn't going to get a job because he hadn't had a job for many months. The wisdom that the Lord gave me was to approach one of the people in the church and ask them if they would provide him with a job - if he qualified. They interviewed him, they said, "We can work with him." They got him a job. Three months later, he resigned from that job and got a better job and moved to another company. From there, he just never looked back. Praise the Lord. Praise Jesus.

After that, he married his girlfriend, had children. He never ever got into another rage like that ever again. Never hit that same depression ever again because the power of speech under the anointing of the Holy Spirit was much greater than any persuasive words. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. \*... that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God. I am going to just in my last couple of minutes, I'm going to use the next few verses, \*However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age ... Not the wisdom of the age - you see, we can talk about economics, we can talk about politics, we can talk about entertainment, we can talk about all manner of things that are the wisdom of this age and they can come to what? They can end up just being eloquent words. \*\* ... nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing (1 Corinthians 2:5-6 NKJV). Come on. The Apostle Paul is putting the wisdom of this age and the rulers of this age together and those two things are coming to nothing. [Pastor John puts his hands on his hips] Come on, I just communicated with you with body language. I made an emphasis statement. Praise the Lord.

You see, as much as we might become educated and we might pursue the wisdom of this age, you got to understand that there are rulers that are behind the wisdom of this age. This is exactly what the Bible is saying. There are rulers that are behind the wisdom of this age that are among men. If we tap into that wisdom, we're doing nothing more than promote their wisdom in the church. Now why would we bring wisdom of men that have rulers of this age behind them into the church when we could rather bring the power of words into the church? That is the power of the Holy Spirit and the power of God. Hallelujah. That's why when we come to pray and we have the house of prayer meetings, we don't tap into the wisdom of men, we actually tap into the foolishness of men. They say, "Why do you come together and use

words to pray? And use words to speak a language that you don't understand? Where is the sense in that?" No, of course, to you it makes no sense because it's stupidity and foolishness to you. Because you don't have that same Jesus that has got power living in you. So our words seem useless but we know that they're words of power. So when we come together and pray, we are not exercising eloquent words, we are exercising the power speech of God. We bring down with our speech in God, we bring down those rulers. We don't confront them, we bring words that God wants us to speak, and those words get the will of God done and when the will of God gets done, it automatically displaces what the rulers of this world want to bring. Praise Jesus.

He goes on to say, <sup>7</sup> But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory (1 Corinthians 2:7 NKJV). God has kept this wisdom hidden from the wisdom of men, for our glory. For our glory.

As we prepare this weekend to enter into what God has got for us, I want to show you how God does things. In the next verse he says, \* ... which none of the rulers of this age knew (1 Corinthians 2:8 NKJV). They did not know that God was using this for the glory of men. \* ... for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. \* But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." (1 Corinthians 2:8-9 NKJV). This thing that God has prepared for those who love Him is not something that's going to come through the wisdom of men, or eloquent speech. This thing is going to come from things men seem to look at as foolishness. But it has power to bring glory.

The Scripture is directly referring; had the rulers that are so smart, that bring all of this knowledge into the earth, that use the wisdom of men to promote themselves; had those rulers who are behind that wisdom known who Jesus was and what Jesus would do, they would not have crucified Him. So, they are so stupid that they can't see beyond, they have to kill a man. They are so uneducated in the ways of God that they couldn't see past; we have to steal, kill and destroy. So because they operate in the spirit of steal, kill, and destroy they had to kill Jesus. Had they known who they were killing, they would not have done it because He was not going to come back by Himself, He was going to come back as all of us, forever and ever and ever, to the glory of Jesus and the glory of us. Hallelujah.

So, finally, how did he persuade men to kill Jesus? How did he persuade them? Words. He used eloquent speakers of the Hebrew Sanhedrin; the priests, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, all of the religious rulers of the time, he used their many words. Many, many words, eloquent speaking words, in the wisdom of men. They even quoted the wisdom of God's scriptures out of context of the time of God. There were a few exceptions. Nicodemus was an exception. Nicodemus was an exception, there were others that were exceptions that when they heard, they believed. But they didn't follow after Jesus because of what people would say, but the Bible tells you in various places that they did believe. But how did He use them? He used words. Can I remind you? Pontius Pilate stands up and he says, "I have two people; I have Jesus and I have Barabbas. Who would you have me release to you?" "Give us Barabbas, give us Barabbas." "I can have Jesus flogged, I can

have him punished." "Crucify Him, crucify Him." Words, eloquent words, words that are the wisdom of this age, words determined to kill a body. But had they known that they were killing the Word that became flesh in power, they would not have done it. Because when they killed the Word that was in power, they released the full glory of that power for eternity. So, you can hear words from the mouths of men, and say, "What knowledge they have, what eloquence they walk in, how we feel inspired, how we feel truly motivated to change our world." Or you can listen to words that come from the mouth of God and have the power that comes with it, to change, to grow, to flow, and to be able to say, "You're doing it for my glory, Lord. I receive my glory in you." Come on, say that with me, "I receive my glory in you." [Congregation repeats after Pastor John] You might say, "You are blaspheming." I'm not. I'm quoting from the book of John and I'm quoting from the book of Corinthians. God gave it for our glory. Hallelujah.

Did you get something out of this message today? Hallelujah. Praise the name of Jesus. Glory to Jesus. Glory to God. Hallelujah. Stand to your feet, please. Hallelujah. I want you to just speak these words after me; I receive my glory from Jesus. In Jesus, I received my glory. Thank you, Lord. Hallelujah.

You see, He's given us His Word to glorify His name, to glorify Himself in you. Which means if you read in the book of John, it's for your glory too. It's not blaspheme to walk around in life and have this mindset, "I think You're going to glorify me now, Lord. I think You're going to glorify me. I think you're going to glorify..." Why? Because when Jesus is glorified in you, He glorifies you. Didn't Jesus say, "Glorify Your Son now, so that the Son can glorify You?" Read it in the book of John and then Jesus said, "I must go so that the glory that is with Us can be on you." That's power speech, that's power speech. I'm going to do what Brother Jerry does; it's what we do man, power speech, man. It's what we do, man, power speech, man. That's what we do. Hallelujah.

We're going to take a five-minute break so I can take this microphone off and put it on Brother Joe. Five minutes, please, just if you need to have a toilet break or a quick water break. Only five minutes, please. And then Brother Joe is going to minister to us. Amen. Five minutes.

## [Five minute break]

Well, I don't have to really introduce you to Brother Joe but you know, I think you know anyway, welcome Brother Joe to the pulpit back from Fort Worth again.

## Reverend Joe McCroskey:

Hallelujah. You know, I was thinking when John was speaking about words because words are the language of God. And even when I first got born again, I had already been saved, got totally away from God and ran for a long time. When I came back in, I had professions that, like John said, we had the professional talents, but didn't have the spiritual talents all. I had a really good pastor, and he would always tell me, you know, "You have to renew your mind, Joe, you're not really renewing your mind to what your skills are. You know, what banking is, you know, what police work is," said, "But you're renewing your skills to the Gospel part of what God wants you to do." I never forgot that.

Everybody has a vision; everybody has a calling. But some of us are in somebody else's vision but we still have that calling to help complete that. I'll never forget that the first thing I noticed but I didn't only notice it, because I found out that God said, I'm going to fill you with the Holy Ghost and we know that is Acts 1:8. He said, "It's to be a witness of Me, to other people." Well, it's going to come out of your mouth, it's going to come out of your life. There's no doubt about it. I remember the language we used in police work was terrible. Why? Because that's what the criminals used. So, to think we had to be effective with them, now, you would never hear me use the language on the street in the bank. I used a totally different set of language in the bank than I did on the night police force. Total vulgar language, bad language because see that's what they spoke. We thought we had to speak it, to get them under whatever you were going to do with them. Didn't have to at all but I didn't know that because that's what we were taught.

When John was speaking, there was a, I guess they came up with, you know, I remember I went back after I'd been saved and you know, the officers in our department started noticing things. The first thing they came up and said, "Joe, you don't cuss anymore." I said, "No, I don't cuss anymore. They said, "What happened?" Okay, now you've got a chance to be a witness because Who's in you is who takes the impurities out. Amen. If you let him. I said, "Well, I received Christ as my Lord and Saviour. He now lives in me and that's not pleasant to Him. So, I will not use that language. I can still be forceful on a call but I don't have to use that language." So, I started speaking another language and that language was the Gospel or what would glorify God. You know, even in an atmosphere of people that didn't believe in God, maybe some of them didn't, and well, a lot of them didn't serve God at that time. Even in that department, they could see what we had was real. But when John was speaking, I remembered that I went in after quite a while of walking in the Word, my language had changed, you know, and my whole mannerism had changed. I prayed over everyone. Whenever we got ready to go on a call, I prayed over all of the men. I prayed over the people we were going to arrest or whatever, you know. Then I didn't realise how much authority Christ really has to put in us that takes over darkness totally. But He was showing me by my walk through life. How many know, we're still writing the book of Acts? We're still writing it. Okay. It's our life now. Amen. Like Pastor John, me, Paul. But I remembered going back into a presence of a lot of the officers. Some of them had been saved, actually, I led them to the Lord, some of them had not.

We went in one day and we sat down at a restaurant. One of them looked at me and said, "You kind of laxed." I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "Well, you kind of laxed. You're not sitting towards the wall." Now, what does sitting towards the wall have to do? We didn't sit in the windows. We sit with our backs to the wall because if somebody comes through with a gun, you didn't want to have your back to the window, and they shoot you before they come through. So, what we did, we had our back to the wall but that day my back was not towards the wall. He said, "You're getting laxed." I said, "No, my back is covered. It's a solid wall behind my back." What did it do? It made an opportunity to be a witness again. They said, "What are you talking about?" I said, "God's got my back." Amen. They will see how you change but it's the glory of God that changes you, not just because you're a good

person. Okay? You'll become a better person, okay? But it's because you renew your mind and follow what the Word says.

I started looking at the Word, you know.I thought, well, which way are we going to go with this and when Brother John was speaking, you know, the Lord brought this scripture up to me. It was one of the ones that I probably used in the early years, more than a lot of them because I had a really good pastor. Nobody knew him. He wasn't well known. He was in a little bitty town across the tracks, they call it. You know, in other words, he wasn't on the side of the tracks that the popular churches were on. A little church on the other side that maybe ran 150 to 200 people, were the ones across the track, maybe ran 700 to 800, but full of sin. But they ran 700, 800, you know. So, you know, nobody knew him. Then when they asked me where I went to church, and I told them, they said, "Joe, you can't go to church there." I said, "So why can't I?" They said, "Well, you're the VP of the bank. You're the vice president of the bank, you can't go over there." And I said, "Being the vice president of the bank has nothing to do with where I go to church."

Why? Because he was feeding me the Word of God which might have been the only place I could have found it in that city. I'll never forget, he told me, he said, "You have to remember, if it's not the Spirit, it profits nothing." He said, "So there's where you go to God, anytime you need a decision or a choice, you go to God and He's going to speak to you and tell you which way to go or lead you and guide you." I never forgot that, even when it had to do with banking. I remember one time when I moved down with Brother Jerry, we were doing a big deal with, actually, a bank. We were doing a deal with the loan company, it wasn't a loan, but it was a type of a loan company. I went into where my prayer chamber was, which is one of my offices and I had a big desk. Under that desk, you could crawl up under it, you could actually get up under it. I mean, it had a large opening where you could get up under it. I always called that my prayer chamber. So, if I put a little note on the door, it just said; please do not disturb I'm praying. Then the girls knew not to come in or if they did come in, they just laid the stuff on the desk, and then real quiet went out. I was up under the prayer and said, "Now Lord, I'm going to do some Kingdom business. I know how to do the bank business But I have to have Kingdom wisdom. I need to know what to say and then when not to say nothing." I'll never forget, the Lord said, "Joe, go to the safe and get a document." So, I did. I went to the safe and I got a document. Then He said, "Now go to the filing cabinet and get this document." There actually were seven documents that He had me get and put into my case. And so, when I went into this meeting, they're all sitting around. And you know, I've never done one of these transactions quite like what we were getting ready to do. But I went in and I sat down, and He said, "Follow Me and listen to Me, and I'll glorify Myself today.

Well, I didn't realise He was glorifying Himself to me. In other words, He was going to show me something I had never experienced before. And you know, we love those types of things. So, they started out and they said, "Okay, Mister McCroskey," and said, "Can you tell us a little bit about the ministry?" And I did. Now the banking type stuff they asked me was not a challenge. But then they said, "Well, you know, we're interested in this. But we would have to have a certain type of document." They named it. And so I said, "Okay." Opened up my briefcase and I laid it out. So, they read it and they said, "Well, you're a step ahead of most people because most people have to go back and get it." And they said, "Now the other type of document

we're going to need is..." Seven documents they asked for and I put seven documents on the table. Now listen, what they said, "You're a man that's done this a lot before." Now, the Lord says, "Don't say a word." In other words; let them think whatever they want. Okay? But I didn't know a thing about it. All I knew is what God said to do. Now, I'm getting to my point. The words that come out of your mouth better be what God's saying to tell you to say. And when He says, "Shut up," you shut up. Amen.

So we closed it. They said, "We've never closed this in one day. But we can see no reason for not closing." We closed in one day. So that meant we did something nobody else had done in one day because God knew everything. All I had to do is find out what's my part to glorify You, Lord. Amen. I never let them know that I didn't know anything about that transaction. Amen. Some of them just looked at it because they couldn't figure, how could he get all those documents without, you know, just because they didn't ask for anything. I learned something that the Lord said, "Now Joe, I just glorified Me, within you." Christ in me, the very hope of glory. Amen.

I said, "Lord, so if I don't know what to do, You do - on everything." I knew that, okay? It didn't matter whether it was a miracle that marked you, a business transaction that marked you, when you knew there was no way it should be done. You know, when I first started out, I learnt how to talk the Word because it was the Word, not just a formality. By renewing your mind, you change your language. I learnt to say, "Blessed," not just because you sneezed but I really wanted to bless you in some way. I learnt the difference in giving. The church we came up in really wasn't a giving church, didn't require you to give a lot. They didn't say it was a seed in any way. But when I started getting taught by a man of God, Word of faith man, he started showing me; you listen to God and you plant a seed. And you know, John, our words are seeds, - good or bad. But they're seeds.

I've used an illustration in churches all over about seeds and words but I never forget this. It never gets too old. Driving into Walmart, I'm going down the right way, getting ready to get to the upfront parking place, and a girl driving a car comes down the wrong way, and pulls right into my parking place. I said, "Bless you." [Reverend Joe makes a fist, suggesting frustration] That was not what I wanted to say. Come on. See, I learnt that what I'm putting into me, is coming out now because what I wanted to do was shake my fist... "Bless you." You know, now she knew she did wrong. She got out of the car and she said, "I apologise." I said, "No, ma'am, I'm glad you got this parking place. Bless you." In other words, somebody else might have jumped on her. Okay, cussed her out but no, you're glorifying God when He changes you. You know who sees it more than anybody? Is you. Hallelujah.

You know, I'm glad He's changed us. I'm glad He's changed, Tony. Me and Tony in Singapore, in a halfway house and they would bring prisoners in and give them one more chance to save their lives - and I'll say it that way - or three strikes they're in prison for the rest of their lives. So me and Tony are going to minister - Tony from the drug culture, me from the police culture. In the old days before we knew Christ, we killed each other. Now we're getting people changed by our testimony of the glory of God, how He's got us working together now to get prisoners and people set free. But it changed, we see it. And all it makes you do is want to do more of it. Somebody asked me one time, said, "So, Brother Joe, why do you keep doing this?" I said,

"Because one thing, it glorifies God and another thing is, it keeps us young." Amen. How many know, me and Brother Jerry are 76 but our spirits don't know we're 76. Amen. But the words, and the guys in the police department and the bank, you know... One day, I think I was working on the cashier side. I'd come from the loan department side and was working on the cashier side. Some of the tellers had some problems and we were getting it worked out and everything. There was a man who walked in and the Lord said, "Let Me out, Joe." I said, "So Lord, something is getting ready to happen?" He said, "Yeah, let Me out". And so, I'm watching now and I see the man walking up there and all of a sudden I see him hit the floor. I mean, he fell, and I mean, I don't know if most people know what I'm talking about, but it was a dead fall. A dead fall is when you're dead on your feet and you hit the ground. Amen. It was a deadfall. When I saw it, I knew, okay, I got to get to him. It wasn't, I have to get to him, it's God's hands through me that has to get to him.

I just broke, went around, laid my hands on him, moved a couple people out because everybody was around him now. Mainly wondering what's happening, you know. I get around and I got ready to lay my hands on him and I said, "Lord, I don't know what to say." He said, "You say the Word." He said, "My Word was sent to heal them." I said, "I, in the name of Jesus Christ, I call healing into your body." Everybody around me is hearing this. And then the Lord said, "And speak loudly in tongues." "No, Lord, I'm not doing that." Why? Because, hey, I'm in a bank and my president is standing over there. You have to make a choice to glorify God and sometimes it's not really what you're going to want to do. I love it when God can communicate with you without saying a word or you saying a word, so quick He says, "What is Deuteronomy?" I will hear it, and I will do it. And when I do, all these blessings will come upon me and my children. So, I knew I can obey, I can disobey. I said, "So Your loudness and mine might be a little different." In other words, I'm not going to do it real loud. He said, "No, loud." I said, "Now what would be the difference, Lord, in loud and just maybe under my breath?" Because He said, "Loud." "How is that going to glorify You, Lord?" Because half of these people don't believe in speaking in tongues and I didn't know what the president and all the rest of them standing around, well boy, when I started praying out loud in tongues, I had all the room I needed. Everybody moved out of the way. Okay.

But see, it wasn't me. Now, the people looked at me, that knew me, but the ones that knew me thought, "What in the world is happening to Joe?" Okay? The ambulance came in, people came in, they looked at him, they took his vitals and everything, said, "He'll be dead before we get to the hospital." I said, "No, he won't. He'll be back here in three days." They heard me say that. Now that came out of my spirit man of life because they said he won't even make it to the hospital. I said, "No, you're wrong. He'll be back in this bank in three days." Now, that's like three days, Jesus said, "I will rise." But that came out of my spirit man. That wasn't Joe now, other than my voice, I was speaking His Words. Of what? Life. And so, everybody's looking but nobody's talking. I sure didn't say a word after that because the Lord said "Now you need to shut up." Because I thought, you don't know what to tell some of them. So, you know, they're all mumbling, you can see it, you know who they're talking about. Amen. So about three days later, three days later, that door opens, the man walks right through it, and comes right to my desk in the VP section. He said, "You spoke words of life over me and I heard them." He was unconscious. But he said, "I heard the words you spoke over me. I heard a language that I'm not familiar with but I could feel the power coming off that language that had life in it." Everything we do, where we go, no matter if we understand their language or anything else, that language of the Spirit, everybody's going to understand and the demons tremble at it. It all has to do with opening your mouth and letting it come out. I learned over all that time that all I had to really do is pray and say, "Lord, show me what to do."

I told John about a situation one time. We went out and I had only been in two major - well, I don't even know how to say it - but it's uncontrollable crowds. In other words, one of them was a prison riot. Uncontrollable, okay. I was with the Highway Patrol that night, they said, "We need you to go with us. We're going down to take the prison back over." I said, "So tell us what you're going to do." They said, "Well, we're getting ready to go in. There's two sets of rotundas." It's a circle-type prison. "We're going to go through the first one, that's not going to be too bad. The second one's going to be bad." I said, "So which one am I going to go in?" They say, "We're putting you onto the wall." I said, "So, I'll be up on the tall wall?" "Yeah," they said. I said, "So what am I doing?" They said, "You will be one of the only ones that will have live ammunition." I said, "You're telling me you got all these national guards up there, and they don't have live ammunition?" "No". I said, "To me that's pretty stupid."

Well, now there is a time to say stuff, okay. Because the one that made that decision had never been in a riot, had never been where you did not have the ammunition or what you needed to put the evil down. But he made that decision, but it wasn't over us. The one that made our decision is the one that sent us in, which was the State control. And so we got up there, they put me up on the rotunda wall. I could see, I mean, terrible things and what was happening was they were cleansing. The Darkness was trying to cleanse the good. Okay, but it could not do it. So that'd be the only one I've been in. I've never been in another one.

Well, then our city, there was a riot that came into our city. The Sheriff called us, hHe said, "How many guys do you have in your squad?" I said, "We've got five." I said, "I can get six if we need them." He said, "Take six and go now." He said, "I want you to observe." He knew my change. He didn't understand it. But he knew the change. It was in me. I had a wisdom that I didn't even have from police work. There were familiar spirits I could understand from police work but not the wisdom that I was getting from God's Word and God's power. So I went and I observed. Captain comes in, Lieutenant comes in and he says, "What do you observe, Joe?" I said, "I know, we take three men out. It'll shut it down." Then he said, "How do you know that?" I said, "God told me." First time I had ever said that to anybody over my rank. God told me there's three men back here and I know where they're at and I know exactly who they are. But my captain had to give the order because I didn't have that.... or I had the authority to God but not through the legal system. So the captain said, "Tell me again how you heard it." I said, "I heard it, God said, 'Take them out. If you take them out, it'll bust up, they'll all leave." And so he said... Now, what is He doing? God is using a natural with the supernatural to bring Him glory because He's the only One that's going to get it. I'm the one that when it happens, I'm going to say, "You better give the glory to God because it wasn't us." Amen.

You're again going back to Acts where He's going to have you be a witness in this earth, walking through this earth, to glorify Him. Amen. Like John said; when you lift him higher and you're going to be touching people that don't believe this. So the

captain said, "So, you really believe this?" I said, "I don't even have a shadow of a doubt." I started speaking in tongues - lightly on this one. Okay. He knew that language, he didn't know anything about it but he had heard the patrolmen say, because we all had numbers, they'd say, "Unit 26?" "Yeah?", and my partner, they would say, "Is Joe praying in that funny language?" Kenny would say, "Yup, he is." They knew it but they didn't understand it. You know, but they knew. And so he said, "Go take them out." I took the five guys with me, we went over, they were sitting on a really nice little car, you know, kind of an old type car. I went over and I said, "Young man, need to talk to you for a minute." Had to get them off the car, got them off the car, we knocked the fire out of them, we cuffed them and we took them out. That was it. I mean, I'm talking within five minutes the whole crowd broke. It was over. Fire trucks were coming in to wet them all down, knock everybody on their feet to the ground, didn't have to. Why? God had another plan.

So we already knew, if we couldn't have done it, maybe God would have glorified it through another way. But I'm going to tell you, He's going to glorify Himself through you. Christ in you. Colossians. Christ in you, the hope of glory. You might be the only part of God somebody ever sees. It could be what you say that changes somebody's life that's not born again, but makes the decision, "I want You in my life, Lord." It doesn't mean they'll have experiences like you or they might. It doesn't matter because it's not about that. It's about the part of glorifying God and it's always going to be what comes out of your mouth. Amen.

You know, it was stuff like that, because the Lord, He works with you the way you're developed. In other words, He knew how to work with me in the bank. He knew how to work with me in the police work. He knew how to work with me in the church. My pastor asked me one time, I went to him, I said, "Pastor, I'm hungry, I want to help you out." And I said, "I don't know what you need me to do but whatever you ask me to do, I'll do." He says, "Okay, let me pray about it". So he prayed about it and he came and he said, "I need you to clean the toilets." First impression was, it's natural, natural, not God. Now I just asked for what? To help him out in some way. VP's don't usually clean the toilets. Vice Presidents at the bank, I don't have to clean the toilet at the bank. And so, the Lord said, "Well, are you too proud to do that?" See, He'll deal with you the way you need to do because like Brother John said, some things had to be out. So I said, "Yes, I'll do that." So I'd come in, boy, I'd go in there, I started praying in Spirit and I cleaned those toilets and everything, you know. And then my last prayer was, "Lord, anybody sits down, let them have an experience." I told my pastor that. [Congregation laughing.] I said, "Let them feel the anointing, Lord." You know, we learn and we can laugh about it then, but you know what? I was very serious. My holy hands had touched those toilets and everything around us, "So, let them have a buzz, Lord." But that's how we learn. And that's how we learn to glorify God in the simple things and then even in the hard things. And how can He give you a position higher, if you can't do the lower? Amen. And that's what, you know, somebody asked, I told them one time, I said, it was about serving, and I said, "You have to serve or you'll never be a leader. They won't follow you unless you know how to serve." And then right after that, my pastor came and he said, "Anybody had an experience today?" I said, "Yeah, I heard one go, whoa."

How many of you know, the Gospel is good. It's fun. You don't have to be dry. You know, I mean, in some of the churches I've been to, you didn't even want to smile,

you know, because they would have thought you were in sin somehow. But it's a good life. It's a fun life. And so, the pastor right after that, I probably cleaned those toilets, maybe a couple of months, I'm going to say, he came to me, he said, "Joe, will you take the youth over?" I said, "Well, I don't know how to do that". I said, "I'll do it, but I don't know how to do it." He said, "Same way you cleaned the toilets." He said, "You listen to God and you see what those kids need." What I thought when he said take the youth, they'd be around fourteen or fifteen. No, it was three-year-olds to about sixteen, all in the same room. I really didn't know how to do that part, you know. But I'll tell you what, when the revival broke out in that church, it broke out in the kids because a lot of the adults would not obey the Spirit.

I remember one day, we went in, a Sunday morning and man, those kids because they knew how to pray. Because what we taught them; lay hands on the sick, quote the Word, pray. If somebody comes in not feeling good, all those kids would go and lay their hands on them and pray for them. We taught them the Word and we taught them fun. We made it fun, okay. But we made it the Word base fun. Pretty soon that Sunday we went in, and I mean, the Spirit fell. All those kids, they were speaking in tongues, they were going from, they were just all over that room. The Pastor said, "Go back and see what's going on in children's church." So, one of the ushers was coming back and he fell on the floor half way back and couldn't get any farther. So, he got up, well he didn't come back yet, so the pastor said, "Go back and see what's going on back there." And so, pretty soon, another one goes back, they're in the middle of the floor. That's two in the middle of the floor, can't get no farther back. The glory was that much. Now when the glory of God gets it like that, it's almost like a fog, not always like a fog, but it looks like a fog. But there's such a presence there that if your body can't take it, you're not going to be in it. Amen. Now you might go out in the Spirit or whatever.

So finally the pastor says, "Call Joe and find out what is going on. Go to the back door." So, they went around and I said, "We've got revival going back here, the Spirit of God is here." The Pastor said, "Bring it to the sanctuary." We brought them through, stepped over the men, brought them in and when we went into the area where the chapel was, everybody... The kids started going and every person they touched would hit the floor and that's where the revival started. Not with the adults, with the kids in the back room. Why? Because they got on fire. You know what, that's why the Lord says, "Be like little children." Don't hold anything back.

You know, there's a lot of people, you know if they're in the presence of some people they don't act that way, but if they're in the other, they'll act that way. Now little children, they act the same way, they don't care. And it hit that way and I learned right then; Lord, You can do anything you want to do.

And of course, the last thing, I'm going to close. John asked me, I don't know how many of you were here the other day when I talked about the first experience that marked my life where healing was concerned. I loved Brother Shambach's ministry and I would listen to him when I was in my gun shop, and I'd have him on the radio. I thought Brother Shambach was black. I thought he was a black man. I've never seen him, I'd listen to all his stuff on the radio but I thought he was a black man. So he was going to be in Tulsa and my pastor asked me and he said, "Joe, we got a chance to go and see Brother Shambach and Brother Hagin," and some more. I

said, "Oh, I'd love to go." Before we went up, we took and agreed we would have front row seats and I really was kind of wavering on that. I was teeter-tottering, I call it teeter-tottering. You know, that's people that are up and down all the time. You know, one's on one teeter-totter, one's on the other but it's up and down all the time.

So, I hadn't been a Christian a long time. We got up there, no seats in the front, not any seats in the back. We thought we were going to stand up and they said, "You know what, come on with me," and they went up and put a row right in the front row, in front of the ones that thought they were in the front row was not now - second row. They set us right there. Oh, now I was marked; I was marked. I mean, I actually saw that I was marked because I didn't think there was any way we were going to get front row, but I was sitting right there.

And so, they brought this white man out. This white man spoke and I thought, well, he's got a Shambach's voice. He has Shambach's voice. And then I realised he's white, that doesn't make no difference at all. Okay, but what I'm saying is, and then he says, but I want to bring up a person, his name is Ronald Coyne. Never heard of him. And so Ronnie Coyne came up and he said, "My testimony is, I was walking down the street and I came across a church. I was drawn into that church." And he said, "I was not saved at that time but I was drawn in there by the Spirit," we know that. And so he went in, and he said, "The lady that was preaching that night, she said, 'There's somebody here that needs healing." And he said, "I don't have eyesight in this eye." And so he said, "I'm going to go up," and he went up, and the lady laid on him, he received his total healing. I thought, "Okay, well, that's okay." You know, I was okay with that part. And he says, "But I perceive." And I thought, well, I read about that with Jesus, where He perceived good and bad. And I thought, I hope he's not perceiving off me. You know, but then the next thing he said, "The only thing is, the lady didn't know I had a glass eye." And now I am perceiving, he is picking up perceiving of a little bit of doubt because I'm thinking he has a glass eve and he sees out of it. I don't know about that.

Then he says, "And I perceive, I perceive," and he said, "Oh, it's you right here." He nailed it. He hit me right in the face. And he says, "So you're," he didn't call it teetertottering, "You're kind of having trouble with this." I said, "I really am." He said, "Have you met me?" "No." "Anybody talk to you in the service?" "No." He said, "So I want you to get something out of your back pocket that nobody knows about." And so he said, "That I can read." I said, "Okay." I graduated high school, and for years, I left my little diploma in my wallet. And so I pulled out my little diploma because he didn't know where I was from or anything. And so he says, "Would you come up here?" I stood up, I thought, oh, man, I'm not used to all these people looking at you. And I went up there, and he said, "Would you hold my eye?" Oh, my gosh, gross. Gross. I'm looking at a socket. That was more gross. And then he said, "Okay, I want him to come up here and you're going to bandage up, you're going to put bandages rounder on my good eye, then you're going to bandage me up where I can see no light at all." He said, "But you're going to hold my eye." I'm looking at that thing, you know. Nice looking eyeball. And so he says, got him all bandaged up and he said, "Now you check. Can you see any, any gaps?" "No." And he said, "So, I can't see out of this eye." "No."

He said, "Hand me what you have." So I handed him my little diploma. He held it up and he said, "Joseph Darryl McCroskey." The Lord said, "Look at the eyeball, Joe." 1965 Class of Henrietta High School. I said, "Lord, he's reading out of that socket or something. I don't know. It could be the eye. It could be the eyeball in my hand. I don't know. He's sure reading." And the Lord said, "I'm marking you. Right now, I'm marking you to know, I can do anything. It doesn't matter if it's natural or unnatural. I'm marking you because you'll see greater things in this." And he said, "I'll take my eye back now." I never doubted again. God can do anything. Anything. Things that we don't think. I'm going to tell you, I already know, we'll see limbs grow out. We'll see these vets that come back with the legs, no legs, get ready, they're coming back on, because He can do anything He wants to do. You have a lot of people that don't believe that, you don't have to. But I don't believe ... How can you read out of a socket? Only God, only God and it glorified God all through that building. It marked me; never doubt what I tell you I can do. And I'm going to leave that with you.

## Pastor John Bendixen:

Praise Jesus. Hallelujah. Okay, so now we are going to test whether you doubt or not. Everybody put your eye ... [Pastor John puts his hand over his eye, joking] I'm going to hold up four fingers.

No, that is amazing. It is the glory of God. It is a wonderful thing. I had something that marked me when I was a little boy. I think I was around about eight years old, and my dad was on a youth camp. We had a youth camp. And we were sitting around a fire and a lady demonstrated, manifested a demon spirit right there. My dad kind of wanted to, my mom wanted to protect us, and I watched my dad take authority over that demon spirit and cast it out of that person. I saw the power of God in action from a young boy and that marked my life that I stand here before you still and I remember it. See, the spirit world is real and what I want to say is that the rulers of this age are at work in our institutions, in our systems, in people all the time. We have to walk in the power of God and in the glory of God so that we can be the church of the Lord Jesus. Hallelujah. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord.

Well, we started the conference with a bang. Hallelujah. Praise Jesus. Stand to your feet everybody. Praise Jesus. Hallelujah. Come on, come on. Just raise your hands where you are, and just praise Jesus for 30 seconds.

Praise You, Lord. Praise You, Jesus. We bless Your name. We thank You for what You have already started here. Thank You for the demonstration of Your Word with power. We don't come with eloquent speech but with the power of the Holy Spirit. Hallelujah. Glory to Your name. We praise Your name, we praise Your name. We praise Your name. Glory to the name of Jesus. Hallelujah. Glory to God.

You agree with me right now that we have an expectation that from 6:30 this evening, we are going to start Sound and Song. We are going to Sound and Song until God releases us to stop. We are going to have a flow of God in Sound and Song. Hallelujah. Praise Jesus. 6:15 for 6:30, you come ready to sing. You come ready to praise and worship the Lord and these things are going to be good. Hallelujah. This is a way that God is going to work in us, amongst us, and you agree with me right now that Brother Jerry when he steps in this pulpit tonight, that he is

going to flow in the demonstration and the power of words, the power of the Holy Spirit. Our expectation is ready. Hallelujah. We are already changing, just from this afternoon. From now we are already changing. We are already receiving. We are already fully prepared and willing and ready and able to hear the Holy Ghost. Glory to God. Praise Jesus. Praise Jesus. Praise the name of the Lord. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Praise You, Jesus.

Yes. Glory. That is what I am talking about. We will see you later. God bless you. Thank you for coming. Can you guys move out of the auditorium as quickly as possible, please. We need the Sound and Song guys to be setting up and getting ready, please. If you want to fellowship, fellowship outside. Thank you.