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Celebration and Relationships Part 2: Leadership, Wealth, Cooperation and Promotion  
Pastor John Bendixen (WTB)

Scripture reference: 1 Peter 5:6-8 (TPT) 1 Corinthians 2:9 (NKJV), 1 Peter 5:2 (TPT) 1 Peter 2:1-3 (TPT), 1Peter 5:2 (TPT), 1Peter 5:4 (AMPC) 1 Peter 5:5 (TPT), 1 Peter 5:6-8 (TPT) 1 Peter 5:10 (AMPC)

Pastor Sharon:

Hallelujah. Father, it's with this reverence, and in this place of reverence that our hearts approach the message that You have for us from Your messenger, Lord. It's in this place of reverence that, when Your message comes to us, Father, Your Word searches our hearts, Lord. Oh Father, and this morning, we so appreciate that our hearts can be searched. Your Word is a searchlight. It's Your searchlight to search our inwards thoughts and motives and purposes of our hearts. It's a two-edged sword, Father. Oh Lord, it's the washing of the water of Your Word Father. Is not Your Word like fire this morning Father, that burns up all in us that cannot stand the test, that cleanses us? Is not Your Word like a hammer Father, that breaks into pieces, the rocks of most stubborn resistance in us, Father? Is Your Word... Oh Father, Your Word, is not Your Word all of these things to us, Father?

But this morning, we thank You - Your Spirit is upon Pastor John. Your Spirit is upon Him and He will speak as of the oracles of God, and he will say what he hears You saying, and he will do what he sees You Doing Father, and our hearts are ready to receive. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Pastor John:

Hallelujah. Praise Jesus. Glory to God. Well, I know that the Holy Spirit is upon me and upon you. The Holy Spirit is upon you. The Holy Spirit is upon you. Hallelujah. He's here to guide you, to lead you. He's here to help you receive the Word so that you can properly live it and do what God wants you to do. Hallelujah. Praise the Lord. Glory to Jesus. You may be seated. Hallelujah.

So, I guess this morning, I need to say... greet you with a *howdy*. And so suddenly, you will see this whole bunch of people in the auditorium that have got cowboy hats on. So yesterday, as I spent, I spent some time with the Joburg people. And we were out in the open and we had camp chairs. And we were just sharing the Word and I wore my cowboy hat, because I needed to be out of the sun, and it was a good opportunity to test out my cowboy hat. And so then, you know, they all but insisted I must wear this hat to church this morning. And then they all said, well, if I do, then they will. So, where's all the people with hats on? Please all, stand up - all the people with hats on, stand up. Come on. Come on - all the way. There you go. Well done. Hey, look at it. Well done, guys. Well done. Thank you. Praise the Lord.

So, I'm going to preach with my cowboy hat on today. Because I want you to know that we are in a season of immense and wonderful favour. God's maximum, His highest level available. We are stepping up and into it. And, you know, I was sharing with them yesterday that I've tried to buy cowboy hats, people have tried to buy me cowboy hats for 25 years at least of traveling to America. Some people have bought me cowboy hats.

And, you know, Pastor Sharon's whole approach towards me and cowboy hats is, "No, John. Nee, that's an American thing. Leave it there." You know, "It doesn't look good on you. It doesn't suit you." It doesn't suit you. It's like, you know, whatever." She had lots to say about it. So, I even brought a cowboy hat home one day and we were talking about it in the car going home yesterday and she said, "Where's that cowboy hat?" I said, "It's just in one of those places. It just went missing. You know, it's just gone. I don't know." But the story to the hat is that when we were in America, this time around, we walked literally on our way to the airport, we walked into a boot and cowboy place, clothes, where they sell boots, hats, cowboy things. We were literally only there for half an hour because we had to catch a plane and someone brought this hat to me and said, "Pastor John, what do you think about this hat?" I said, "I like it." So, put it on, perfect size. I didn't even have to try another size on, it was the perfect size. I said, "This fits good, looks good." And they said, "Can we buy this for you, please?" I said, "Well if you insist." That's Brother Jerry's statement, you know - if you insist, you know. And so, I mean, with all of these years, this is the year of the maximum. This is the year where anything is possible. Anything. Anything. I mean, if you had to tell me that I would be wearing a cowboy hat in church in South Africa, I'd say, "No way." But here I am. Hallelujah. And who knows what this is a sign of things to come. Hallelujah. All manner of properties can come into our hands. All manner of things can happen this year because God is with us. His Spirit is upon us. Amen. Hallelujah. So, for today at least, please get used to the fact that I'm wearing my cowboy hat. Do I look good? *[Miranda answers, "Yes."]* Thank you, Miranda. She's my daughter-in-law, she must say that. What do you all say? I'm looking for a compliment here, come on. *[Congregation compliments Pastor John on his cowboy hat]* Praise the Lord.

Truly, God is with us and that's a wonderful thing. God is with us. It's a powerful thing that life without relationship is not really life. You know, you can go about living to create wealth but if you turn around and you have wealth without relationship, then you don't have wealth because it's just money. You can strive to have achievements and success in different areas of life but if you have no one to share it with, and you have no relationships to go back to, then it's empty. It doesn't matter how much you try and embrace success on your terms because it's on your terms, you will find yourself in a place that there are others that have other terms and then the two don't meet. So, then the relationships fall apart. Everything that God intended for us was based on a relationship. Wasn't it? I mean, when He made man, He made man in His image. Then He made a woman because He said, "It's not good for man to be alone." And He made them in His image - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - because they had a relationship, and He wanted their relationship to look like the God relationships and then He wanted the Godhead with the man that He made to look like Him to have the relationship. And everything that He gave him dominion of, and everything that He gave him authority over and everything that He gave into his hands, all of His blessing, all of the things that God gave to man, He did it because of relationship. He did it through a relationship. He wanted to improve the relationship. He wanted to grow and become more like Him. He didn't design the relationship to fall apart. The fact that the relationship between man and God fell apart, wasn't God's doing, wasn't His plan - it was man's choice. And like I said, last week, I was having a bit of fun, and I will occasionally still have some, "It's that woman You gave me," you know. I certainly don't believe that about the woman He

gave me. She's the joy of my life, she's the strength of my life and she's my life partner, my ministry partner, she's my joy to me. In fact, I can say about my woman, "Thank God, it's that woman You gave me." Amen. Amen.

But in principle, it is someone else's fault, always it's not yours, isn't it? I mean, that's how Adam handled it. You know, someone is always got to make a decision to go against the will of God and then it's never their fault. It's always someone else's fault. And both of them blamed each other, and then they blamed the devil that deceived them and, from that time till this, it's never your fault or my fault. It's always someone else's fault. It's on that basis, you know, that God had to send Jesus and say, "Listen, I'm taking the fault and the blaming and all of that out of the equation. You don't have to find fault anymore. You don't have to feel guilty anymore. You don't have to put blame anywhere anymore. Just receive the life of Jesus." When you believe Him, and you receive Him, then you restore the relationship that was always supposed to be to what it can be.

It's an interesting thing, that in our modern-day world, in our modern-day world, the thing that people are most hungry for is the thing they most don't know how to get - relationships. The younger generation is growing up, wanting quality relationships. But the fabric of how the relationships is put together is so flimsy, that it's a never-achievable, always-disappearing thing that they can't find. So, we as the church, we, the people who know how to have a relationship with Jesus, and with the Father and the Holy Spirit, we have the answer. We have the answer. And so, we must let our light shine that we have relationships. It's therefore not a surprise to me that the enemy would attack marriage in the church. Because if he can break a marriage down, then he can, he can destroy the very fabric of a relationship that's the core of a relationship - In a family.

First of all, you'll try and break your relationship with God, then he'll try and break the relationship in the marriage, and then he'll try and break relationships in the home. And then he'll try and break the relationships in the church. And any one of those, in any kind of way, shape, or form will do. Yes? Because if he can break relationships, then he can break what you believe. Yeah. It all comes down to having a relationship. Everything that we do in the ministry, everything that we do, must be in support of, and to promote relationships. The most powerful relationship is the one you have with Jesus. And then after that, everything else falls into place. That's why we need to take the word of God and use the word of God to build relationships because if you build relationships, on other things that are important, they are useful to make creating the glue in relationships. And if we build solely on those things, then it becomes a very *solely* thing. But if we build on the Word of God, and God's life is in the relationship, then we've got much more to depend on than what we like or we don't like. What's convenient or not convenient? What's useful for a moment or not useful? Yeah. Praise the Lord.

Over the last couple of weeks, I've been talking about the wisdom of this age and how the wisdom of this age just doesn't do it. It's all going to fade away. And that we have the wisdom of God, and that's how we must live - by the wisdom of God, not the wisdom of this age. They don't have the answers. They'll tell you they do. They'll act like they do. And the whole institutions and the systems of the world are designed to make you believe that they have, but they don't. The Bible says it's all

going to fade away and fall away, but He and His Word will last forever. I've been reading verse nine of first Corinthians, chapter two, **9But as it is written, "Eyes not seen, nor ear heard, Nor has entered into the hearts of man, The things that God has prepared for those who love Him" (1 Corinthians 2:9 NKJV).**

I just want to focus on that for a minute for those who love Him, God has prepared for those who love Him. What does that sound like? Doesn't it sound like a relationship? God has prepared for those who love Him. You see, the Christians want to talk a lot about what God has got for you and He has. And they want to talk about all the blessings and all the good things that God has for you, and He has. And they want to hear about all of the things that you can believe for, and you can have that your eye hasn't seen, your ear hasn't heard, you can't imagine it, you can't even dream about it. And we get really excited about it, but it's for those who love Him. It's about relationships. And so, it's not a formula. I've always preached this and taught this. Faith is not a formula for success. It is a pattern to victory. But faith is not a formula. Faith is a relationship. Faith is a relationship with Jesus. Faith is a relationship with the Word, which is Jesus. Faith is a relationship with the Holy Spirit who will reveal the Word to you. And it's the Father who gave us faith. So, it's a relationship.

I was so surprised one day. I wrote this thing that I've just said, I wrote it on Facebook or many years ago on some form of social media platform. And one of my friends that used to be a pastor in the ministry, and I knew him for a long time. He emigrated from South Africa to America, and he responded to my comment on my Facebook page. And he had this long dissertation of why faith is not about a relationship. I thought to myself, how is it possible that you believe that faith is a formula? How is it possible that you believe that faith is just about words that you speak without a living relationship with those words? I mean, how's it possible that you even think that? And then I thought to myself, okay, well now I know why he's not in the ministry anymore. Yeah, because he couldn't stand the test of the fire of if you don't believe something and the fire comes to test what you believe, then if you can't stand the test of the fire, then you just can't stand in the place that God needs you to stand in.

Yeah, so to whom much is given, much is required. And it is a thing that if you've been given revelations by God to live by, you are going to be required by God that you live by those revelations. God is not going to require that someone who doesn't have the revelation, that He measures them, or He has a requirement of them by the same standard.

We talked last week about children and young men and fathers, and there are different things that we have, and we learn at different times of our lives. God holds us responsible to the revelation He's given us. Amen. *Ja, dis maar so.* Because you have to live according to the revelation, so the revelation He gives you becomes a revelation to others. If you say, "I receive the revelation, but I'm not going to live it because it's my personal comfort zone not to live the revelation" God's Word of revelation must judge your life by the revelation He gave you. He must judge it because He's sown that Word into your spirit. He made that Word alive in your spirit, and you have chosen not to live by the same revelation that He made alive to you. Then it's about the choice that you've made, which means your relationship you have

chosen to be something else not to the revelation that He gave you. It means you following your agenda, not what God is revealing to you that He wants you to follow. I'm really preaching good. Amen. Right there is the answer to why many people don't see the result of their faith. Yeah. Praise the Lord.

Today, I want to spend a little bit of time, because next weekend, we are going to have *Money with a Missions Conference*. And I want to clear some things up today. I want to talk about some things today that whatever God wants me and others to share next weekend, I want you to receive the balance of what I'm saying today, ahead of the weekend. Okay, are you all with me?

Remember, it's all about relationships. I'm going to read to you from first Peter chapter five, verse one, I'm going to read it from the Passion translation. I will occasionally refer to the Amplified to just bring out what the Amplified has to say.

Verse one, **<sup>1</sup>Now, I encourage you as an elder, an eyewitness of the sufferings of Christ, and one who shares in the glory that is about to be unveiled. I urge you my fellow elders among you. (1 Peter 2:1 TPT)** The first thing I want to say and show you that he's writing a letter to an elder, and he's encouraging the elder who is an eyewitness of the sufferings of Christ. Now, I personally have not had been a witness to the sufferings of Christ with my personal eyes. Because Christ was on the earth 2000 years ago. But I have been a witness to the sufferings of Christ because I have suffered the same sufferings and the same persecutions that Christ has suffered. I have suffered those same sufferings, in my life, in my ministry, in my assignment. I have been a witness, and I am a witness of the sufferings of Christ. And I am a witness that when you are suffering for Christ, He will always give you the strength to get through that.

So, when he says, I'm writing to you, elders who have witnessed the fellow sufferings of Christ, that doesn't mean to say that we can't witness the same or similar sufferings. **<sup>1</sup>...I urge my fellow elders among you, <sup>2</sup> to be compassionate shepherds who tenderly care for God's flock and who feed them well, for you have the responsibility to guide, protect, and oversee. (1 Peter 2:1-3 TPT).**

So, let's talk for a moment - what is the responsibility of an elder, a shepherd? What is the responsibility? First of all, if we can just go through it, little bit, by little bit. Be compassionate. I'm just using the Passion translation; it says the same things in the King James and the Amplified just in different ways. Be compassionate. Be a shepherd. You must tenderly care for. Feed them well. Be responsible, for how you guide. Protect oversee. In other words; watch over.

I'm going to go into the next portion, which is; **<sup>2</sup>...Consider it a joyous pleasure, not merely a religious duty. (1 Peter 5:2 TPT)** What is the difference between somebody who considers it to be a joyful pleasure, not just a religious duty? Well, if I'm living in relationship with Jesus, and my assignment is fulfilled in my relationship with Jesus, then whatever Jesus wants me to do, I find it joyful. If I do this as an act of just responsibility, then my behaviour becomes dependent. My behaviour becomes dependent on how people treat me, it becomes dependent on whether I've got enough time in front of the people, perhaps, it might be whether I'm treated with respect, it might be whether I just, I'm going through a tough time, so I'm going to let everybody else know what my tough time is.

Well, you know, if a shepherd is going through a tough time, that doesn't change what he has to do with the sheep. Right? He's got to deal with his own tough time. In fact, it doesn't matter if he's going through a tough time, if a wolf comes, you still got to fight the wolf. You know, you can't say for a moment, "I think I'll just not be a shepherd because the wolf might eat me." No, the whole point about being a shepherd is, "I'm here to fight against the wolf. That's my job." Right? Yeah.

Then the next verse says, <sup>2</sup>... **Lead from the heart, under God's leadership, (1 Peter 5:2 TPT)** lead from the heart under God's leadership. You know, I've heard many, many leaders, pastors' leaders, talk, and so that's part of the reason why I have the walk with my wife that I have with Pastor Sharon is because in years gone by, and some of it hasn't changed in more recent years. Even in our life, I've heard people say this, you know, "I don't get on so well with my wife, we just live together." Well, if you say that, then that's what you'll have. I've heard people say, "My kids are such a pain to me. I don't know what to do with them. I'd rather be away from my kids than be around my kids." Sounds like a shepherd to me. No, that's not the heart of a father. A father doesn't say I have a relationship with my kids because it's convenient. A shepherd doesn't have a relationship with the kids because it's convenient. No, a shepherd and a father has a relationship with the kids, because he's the shepherd. Right?

The same thing applies to the shepherd of the church. I mean, it's, it was so big for me, because, you know, I grew up watching a lot of hypocrisy in the church. When I married Pastor Sharon, I said to the Lord, I said, "Lord, I will go into the ministry." And I told her that before I married her, I said, "Sharon, you must know God's called me to preach, I will be a pastor, I'm going into the ministry. So, if you marry me, I might not be one now, but the time will come when I will be, and you need to be marrying me knowing that that's what's going to happen." Of course, she had a heart for God, she loved God. And that's one of the reasons I fell in love with her. But we knew that the time would come.

I always used to say, if I have to choose between ministry and my marriage, I choose my marriage. Why? Because there was so much nonsense going on in the ministry that people would say my ministry is more important than my marriage. And I just, I never received that. And so, I used to say this a lot in church. And then the Lord corrected me one day and he said, "John, I don't want you to stop saying that, because it's not a choice for you. You've already made the choice." He showed it to me like this; "You're not called to marriage; you're called through marriage to My church. So, you don't ever have to make the choice between church and marriage, because you've already made the choice for Me. So when you choose Me, you choose Me in your marriage, and you choose Me through your marriage to the church." It's never an 'either or' decision.

The same thing applies when I'm called as a shepherd. If I'm called as a shepherd to you, I'm called as a shepherd no matter what the season of my life is. And whatever the season of my life is, and where I've been, I'm called to be a one that is compassionate. I must be a shepherd, I must tenderly care for all of you, and feed you well. I am responsible before God, what kind of spiritual food you eat. If I choose to just have evangelistic services all the time, I would be out of order of God,

because then I'm not taking care of you. It's part of the reason why the Lord had me start a Bible school because it's one of the ways that we can grow you and feed you good, healthy food is Bible school, Bible study. Amen.

Similarly, if you have a child who just grows up in the house, and you just feed them sweets and ice cream all the time, they may actually grow up because of energy, but they won't be healthy. And similarly in a church if we don't have prayer meetings you need a prayer meeting, to have a healthy diet of spirit life. You got to have Bible study, to have a healthy diet of Spirit life. You got to have fellowship amongst people to have an interchange and an exchange of the Word and the gifts of life between us. Similarly, if we don't make any space for you to bring your gift to work in the church, then your gift can't grow in the church, and your gift needs to grow in the church because you are the flock of God.

You can say, well, "I'll develop my gift outside there in the world, and then I'll bring it to the church." No, no, what is the development of that out there in the world got to do with what's in the church? What has light got to do with darkness? Hello.

That's why, you know, we need to be developing ourselves in our gifts amongst each other. Because the light feeds the light, grows the light and we share the light with each other. I said yesterday when I was talking to the Joburg people. I said, "One of the most amazing things to me is that when I touch other Christians, I touch the God in those Christians." It's one of those things that tells me Jesus is alive. Because when you come and share your life that's in you, when you come and share the God that's in you with me. When I see you sharing the God that's in you with someone else, I see God. I don't just see kindness; I see the God of kindness in you. Amen.

I need to be responsible, I need to guide, I need to protect, and I need to oversee. Not just me alone, but those that God has also raised up amongst us to do this. So, I want to make this clear. What I do here is not a religious duty to me. I do this truly with joy in my heart. This is a joyful thing, I enjoy to be amongst you, I enjoy to hang out with you.

It might not feel like that all the time because sometimes the responsibility of making sure that I'm protecting, I'm caring, I'm feeding, I'm doing all of those things. I have to do that too. But if the truth be known if I could hang out with you and just share the Word with you all the time and leave all those other things... Hey, can someone else take care of that, please? You know because that's responsibility. It's work for me, but it's a work God requires me to do, and I do it joyfully.

If you say, "Pastor John, can we just hang out with you more and we'd love to just share the Word with you?" I promise you; the feeling is mutual. I want to go on adventures into Africa with you and go and share the Gospel and go ride horses somewhere. And go and ride a bike somewhere and go and ride a motorbike somewhere. And just share the Word and do just amazing things. And then I want to go and have coffee with you when you've just come out of a meeting. Or I want to have a conversation with you when you're about to go into a meeting and you say, "Pastor John, I'm going to a critical business meeting here. I need your prayer because it's got a big consequence." I want to be there. Hello. I can't always be there. But as much as I can be there, I will be there. But not just me alone. But there

is Pastor Christi, there is Pastor Sharon, there's Pastor Garth and there is others that God is busy raising up. Amen. To name a few, there are others that God has placed in the ministry that are in leadership positions, but they don't carry yet the official title of Shepherd, but they do Shepherding. Amen. Praise the Lord.

Okay, so <sup>2</sup> ...**Consider it a joyous pleasure and not merely a religious duty. Lead from the heart under God's leadership - not as a way to gain finances dishonestly but as a way to eagerly and cheerfully serve. (1 Peter 5:2 TPT)** So when I'm going to talk about money next week, I want you to know that I don't do this because of money. I have never done this because of money. I have always done this because of calling, because of an assignment, because of what God required from me before I was even born. The first words my father spoke over me, "Here's your preacher." The thing that God did for me when I was seven years old, and filled me with the Holy Spirit, in the front of the church, when I didn't know anything about even being filled with the Holy Spirit really. When God encountered me when I was 15 years old, and called me to the ministry, these are things that God chose to do in my life. None of those things were because of money.

When I was 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 years old, I used to go with my guitar and go to, those days downtown Hillbrow because it was still safe to go to Hillbrow, downtown Johannesburg. I used to go with my guitar and a microphone. What do they call it? A bullhorn. I used to go with one of those things and I used to go and sing on the corner with my friends. I used to go and sing songs and I used to take this thing and I used to go and preach the gospel loudly and do an altar call and lead people to Jesus and then bring them to church. That was what I did when I was a teenager. I didn't hang out with girls. I didn't want to have dates. I didn't want to have things like that. I wanted to serve Jesus with all of my heart, and I did serve Him with all of my heart. And when I was at school, I didn't behave one way at school and another way in church. I lived my church in my school, for which I received great persecution. And so, this thing of an eyewitness of the sufferings, I received that already at school. I was already persecuted for my faith at school. When I was in the army. Everywhere I've been in my life I've had persecution, for the name of Jesus, and I'm glad to have had it. Amen.

So <sup>2</sup> ...- **not as a way to gain finances dishonestly but as a way to eagerly and cheerfully serve."** (1 Peter 5:2 TPT). In the Amplified Bible that says like this, verse 3, <sup>3</sup> **Not domineering [as arrogant, dictatorial, and overbearing persons] over those in your charge, but being examples (patterns and models of Christian living) to the flock (the congregation).** <sup>4</sup> **And [then] when the Chief Shepherd is revealed, you will win the conqueror's crown of life (glory).** (1Peter 5:4 AMPC)

Hello, I ask you. I ask you. Do you see anything about my life that is trying to extort money out of you for what I do? So, when you hear strong words that might come about our *Mission of Money* next week, you are receiving the balance today, that I'm not after your money. I can say, you know, any rights or wrongs about my life in the past, I can say this, as a part of my testimony before God, that when God showed me how to live by faith, and live in Him with faith, that the faith that God gave me, God blessed me financially. And I came into the ministry with such an abundance of finance, that I never needed anybody's money ever.



Not to say that ministers who go into the ministry without money, need to have money. If they know this message, they don't need to have money, they can trust God for money. And neither should they feel like they are dishonest about money unless they are dishonest about it.

We learned something really important from Kenneth Hagin, many years ago. And Kenneth Hagin, when he was alive, he said: "Many, many, many ministers have lost the anointing, because of the way of money." Money is a very big potential pitfall to pastors and to Christian leaders. But this passage of Scripture is very clear to us about how we should behave. That my walk with you should not be to try and have dishonest gain. I can honestly say before you, that my life is dependent on my giving, it always has been dependent on my giving. And if anybody has been around me long enough, they would have experienced in one way or another that I'm a giver. Pastor Sharon and I, we are seed sowers, we are financial givers. We are also Word sowers. And because we are Word sowers, the Word grows up in our hearts, and we have faith for finances. Okay.

The Passion Translation says: **<sup>3</sup>Don't be controlling tyrants but lead others by your beautiful examples to the flock. <sup>4</sup>And when the Shepherd-King appears, you will win the victor's crown of glory that never fades away. (1Petrus 5:3-4 TPT).** That is what I strive for. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. That is my reward, the victor's crown of life, because of the job that I will do. That is the job that God requires me to do as outlined in this. This is a good thing. Yes.

The way the apostle Paul writes it in 2 Corinthians chapter 9, he says, never give under compulsion, or never feel like you're giving because people are extorting you or trying to draw money out of you. You have to make up in your own mind, in your own heart, in your own walk with God what you want to give. And then when you give it, you must give it cheerfully, not under compulsion, not because you feel like you're obligated to give, but you need to give because you are doing so cheerfully.

That's why my job is to make sure that I am not trying to get you to part with your money, but my job is to lead you, guide you, feed you, create protection for you and part of that is to teach you what I'm teaching today. That when we do talk about money, I'm not trying to talk to you about money so that you can part with your money. I'm teaching you because God wants to get money to you.

The only way that you can know how to get the money, how to get the promotions, how to live life in the order of God, is to have the order of God taught to you. Then it sounds like, when you hear the order of God taught to you, it sounds like maybe we're asking you to part with your money. But the only way that you're going to get to walk in faith is when you sow to the revelation.

When you hear us talk about *Money with a Mission*, we want God to reveal things to you so that you get free. And so, when you get free in your revelation, then you are going to be accountable before God how you walk with the revelation.

When the Lord began to really minister to us about finances, I got a revelation that the Word of God is my source. The love of God is the foundation of the Word, that is my source. So, I could count on the love of God, which I had a revelation of, the true

love of God. So, because I had a revelation of the love of God, and because I understood that the Word of God is my source, then when I started to sow my financial seed, I was sowing my seed on the foundation of His love and His source. Because I was now sowing my financial seeds on the basis of His love and His source, I knew that my seed would return to me as a harvest.

After I received that revelation, I've never turned back. And still today, my seed that I sow to my spiritual leaders is never because of an obligation, neither is it based on his need. It is all based on my desire to have a seed and honour him with my seed. Because I'm actually honouring God, because I'm honouring the man that God has placed in my life. So, the honour has to be revealed, it can't just be an honour principle that I understand.

If I don't do something, and actually let go of something that's in my hands then honour can never be revealed. Honour is just a word if it's not released. So, praise the Lord, that we live in that situation. I thank God, that the man that God has placed me with has an understanding of these matters. When he receives the honour of seed into his life and he... so I showed you that letter that he gave me a couple of weeks ago. *I trust with you John, that you will receive the maximum this year based on your generous gift to me.* What's he, he's recognizing the honour that exists. He's responding to the honour that exists. He's placing his faith together with the honour that's been released, and together, we receive the harvest. He's already participating in the honour and the harvest. And now he's believing that the honour and the harvest will be returned to us in increasing harvest. This thing just continues to work.

There is no downside to it because you can't say, God, take my money. What's He going to do with dollars, yuan, rands, what is He going to do with that? There is none of that in heaven. That is just a mechanism for man to live on the earth. So, when we give on the earth, He is receiving it in heaven as though it were heavenly currency. What is that heavenly currency? It's honour, it is faith, it's the Word of God that is working. It is a recognition of Him as the Source. So, ok, are we clear? [*Congregation: yes.*] Are we clear over all the years that you have lived with me, that you have seen me, that you have participated with me, that you recognise that I'm – we don't do that in this ministry.

But I want to use this moment, to say something else to you. I want to say on behalf of Pastor Sharon and I: I want to say thank you to all of you who have shown honour, and have shown love to me and Pastor Sharon and given into our lives and sown into our lives and blessed our lives with your substance, with your kindness, with all of the good things that you have done for the church, all of the good things that you have done for us personally. I want to say thank you. We receive everything you do for us personally – we receive it as though you are giving directly into the hands of God. It doesn't matter if someone gives us R50, if someone else give us R500, someone else gives us R50 000. The amount of money is not the issue, it's what's happening in your heart that you honour God. Because different people are at different places in their lives and someone's R5 is as equal to someone else's R50 000. And in the heart of God, He has already revealed Himself when Jesus was teaching His disciples and He says, you see, the man with the bag of money – this woman that gave the two pieces, she gave everything she had, but the man with the bag of money, he just gave out of his excess. So, which of those do you think God is

pleased with? He said, "It's the one who gave all that she had," because she was giving God honour with everything she had. So, to Jesus, it was never about the amount. To Jesus, it was about the amount that someone was keeping.

Anyway, I won't go there, cause otherwise, I will get distracted. But that is between you and God and that is a living relationship. That is a living growing revelation that the more you grow in it, the more revelation you have in it, and the more you obey God in it, the more you are able to say, all right Lord, I will be an instrument that You can use me and when I am that instrument, then the honour that I can show, is based on the revelation. When you have that revelation, and you become an increasingly useful instrument in that area, it could be your gift speaking.

Then you place your gift in the hands of God and God says, now you recognise that I gifted you with this, it's not you. And that's the big shift. When God is the recognition of your gift, not you. Then you actually realise, my whole life is wrapped up in God and my whole gift is actually wrapped up in Him, therefore, He can do with my gift whatever He wants. Then, your relationship with God again – and here is the word *relationship*... your relationship with God becomes the space that you use.

It's the same as if you come here early on a Sunday morning to come and pray – and you say, yoh, you know I to get up early to come and pray before church and we do pre-service prayer or you come here on a Tuesday night and you want to pray or you engage... You are giving your gift and your energy, and you're doing it because you want God to use your words. You want God to use what you've got. So, when God uses your words, and He uses what you've got, it's a recognition that says, "I'm submitting it to God." Cause if you look at it in the natural you could say, I could spend that hour more productively using my words.

On the weekend I'm going to talk about empty words. And how productivity in your life can be increased or decreased based on empty words or productive words. And that's a lot more than you think. So don't think you know the whole message just because I gave you the headline. Otherwise, I'd kind of just not give you the headline and then, you know. So, empty words, empty words. I have to make a decision, I have to make a decision, that what I'm going to do with my gift, I'm going to do with my gift, what I'm going to do with my calling, I've got to place it in His hands. Because the next passage of Scripture says, **<sup>5</sup> In the same way, the younger ones should willingly support the leadership of the elders. In every relationship, each of you must wrap around yourself the apron of a humble servant. (1 Peter 5:5 TPT)**

If I placed myself, based on what the Amplified, the way he put it, an arrogant dictator, I'm out of the order of God. What I have to do is I've got to wrap myself with an apron of a humble servant. If I do that, then I'm being a disciple. The highest life I can lead is not based on the fact that I am an elder, leader, shepherd, that's not the highest life that I can lead. My highest life that I can lead is first to be God's sheep. Let Him guide me, let Him lead me, let me live after Him. Because once I do that, then He can say, "Now you can lead other sheep, and you can be a shepherd. Because I've called you to do that." If I try and lead without knowing that God's my Shepherd, then I will never know how to lead as a shepherd.

The first thing I've got to do is learn how to submit to God's shepherding me. I think I'm preaching quite good today. You know, when the Lord said, "I want you to minister on this," I said, "Lord, you know, this is not often preached about in church," and He said, "Exactly, John, I want you to state the case before you get into teaching about money." Because I don't want anybody to be offended about what comes when it's taught when we talk about money. So, <sup>5</sup> **...each of us must wrap around ourselves the apron of a humble servant, Because: God resists you when you are proud but multiplies grace and favour when you are humble.**

How many of you want grace and favour multiplied to you? Then what we must do is wrap ourselves with humility and say, the first place is, I've got what I've got because of God, not because of me. Doesn't matter where I'm at in my life, what my station is in life, what my position is in life, I am where I am because of what God gave me. I mean, you know, if I can just say for a minute, if you look at all these beautiful people that are fashion models, and they get paid large sums of money because people can put makeup on their faces, and they can wear nice clothes and parade their bodies on platforms like they've got something special. Well, the world might say, "You have something special because you're really beautiful." Hmm, I wonder what you had to do with it? Huh? Did you decide who your mom was and who your dad was? Who your biological mother was, who your biological father was? Did you decide that? No, you had nothing to do with it. And so, you are just a byproduct of something. And now you think you're something special because you walk around parading something you had nothing to do with? Hey. And I'm just using that as a single example of how people have got it all messed up that actually what you've got, is you or something special, because it's you. And so I'm just, you know, I've got something special. And I've got something more than someone else's got then so. You know, look at me. And, you know, I'm so great. I wish everybody else wishes they were me. Yeah, that sounds like a real, humble servant.

<sup>6</sup> **If you bow low in God's awesome presence, He will eventually exalt you as you leave the timing in His hands. (1 Peter 5:6 TPT)** You see, this focus of the thing is not how to be exalted and promoted. This thing is about how you can serve and how you can live with the Shepherd. How you can actually honour God, how you can honour the people of God around you, and how you can do things and then God says, "I'll exalt you and promote you." <sup>7</sup> **Pour out all your worries and stress upon Him and leave them there, for He always tenderly cares for you.** <sup>8</sup> **Be well balanced and always alert because your enemy the devil roams around incessantly, like a roaring lion, looking for its prey to devour. (1 Peter 5:7-8 TPT)** Last week, I roared a bit. Was it last week or the week before? It was last week. I roared a bit based on this scripture. Right, I'm not going to roar again. I think I frightened a few people. No, I just want to say that, that this passage of scripture, verse eight.

That in the Amplified Bible says, <sup>8</sup> **For that enemy of yours, the devils roam around like a roaring lion. (1 Peter 5:8 AMPC)** In the King James version, the Word says, "Your adversary." So, the literal Greek translation of that word adversary literally means in two compound words that are put together *against righteousness*. So, your enemy is against your righteousness. He is like a roaring lion against you because of your righteousness. And he's looking to see who he can devour. Because the devouring is based on those who understand their

righteousness or those who don't. Now if I know who I am, that I am the righteousness of Christ, then I have something that the devil can't steal. What is it? It is that I have a strength knowing that my walk with God is not based on what I do, but it's based on what Christ has done. Therefore, as a Christian, I can depend on the grace, the favour, the blessing of God, the empowering life of God that is in me because it's not of my own strength that I am what I am. But it's because He gives me His strength. So now, if I know that He is giving me His strength, then I can live life with His strength. I can make choices, to be a servant, and to let my gift work for the church work for the body, because He strengthens me to do it. It's not because I am this capable person. So, if I understand that I am righteous in Christ and that I can do nothing to earn anything.

Yes, if I am righteous in Christ, then he can't devour me because I stand behind the righteousness of Christ. I don't, I don't stand on my own recognition. I don't stand on my own performance. I don't stand on my own capacity and capability. You will hear me, God willing, you'll hear me speak more about that over the weekend, capability, and capacity. But I don't have to stand on my capability and my capacity. I stand on what God what Jesus has done for me. So now, if I'm doing that when I'm living life, I can say everything that God brings to me is not because of how smart I am, how I perform, how righteous I am, I stand behind the righteousness of Jesus. Now, when the enemy comes against me, what is he coming against? He wants to shift me from being Christ righteous to being self-righteous.

The minute I think I am self-righteous; it's based on what I've been able to accomplish in my salvation. The minute I'm self-righteous, the devil who is against my righteousness roars and he sees I fear, because why do I fear? Because I have placed my life on a self-righteous track, which puts me outside of the protection of God.

The minute I say, I'm behind His righteousness, when he roars to devour me, I say, you can't touch me because I'm behind Christ. And nothing I have is based on what I've paid for everything I have is what He paid for. And so now everything that I have is not based on my words, it's based on His Words, everything that God brings to me is not based on how smart I am, but how smart He is.

His guiding, His leading, His everything is what got me where I am not me. Now, I'm not self-righteous, I'm behind His righteousness. Now, when he comes to roar against me, and he tries to shift me, I say, "I cannot move because if I move, you will destroy me. Because if you can shift me away from who I am in Christ, I will depend on myself and then I'm done for," because who is going to withstand the fearsomeness of a hungry hunting devouring lion? No one.

Someone who is in a self-righteous state is not going to be able to withstand the wiles of the devil is not going to be able to withstand the roaring force of the enemy. But if you stand in the righteousness of God, then you are safe. Then when he roars against your money, you can say, "Hey, I've spoken the Word. I've been a tither; I've been a giver. I've spoken the Word; I stand behind that. That's what I have to stand behind. It's not because I've got the best job or the best-paying job. It's because I stand behind Him. And so, if he comes against your relationships, then you say, "Hey, I'm not here because of my relationship, how good I run my relationship. I'm

here because He showed me that my relationship is restored because Jesus is in me." Hallelujah.

So, the enemy goes around as the roaring lion seeking whom he may devour, who is the one he's going to devour? Those who say I'm self-righteous. Whereas if you say, "I am the righteousness of Christ," he can't devour you. How can he? Because he would have to go after Jesus, he tried that and failed already. So, when he just sees Jesus, he says I can't touch Him, can't touch Him. He sounds like Jesus. He talked like Jesus, he looks like Jesus. Everything he says is about the Father. It's the glory of the Father. It's the glory of the Son. It's the glory of the church. It's the glory of everything. He comes with a humble and a low heart. He comes with a serving apron. How can I touch him? He looks like Jesus.

That's why Jesus said to Peter, "I got to wash your feet, because I got to put the lowly serving apron on, so that you have an example to follow of a Shepherd who even though Jesus, the Father God is about to raise Him up and exalt Him, My primary thing is to serve you". And Peter says, "No, no, no, no, again, you must wash, no no Peter, the words going to wash you right now, I am the servant who must wash you." I am preaching really good today, the Holy Spirit is doing a good job here today. Just setting the parameters right for what's coming. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Praise the Lord. I want you to know, I think I'm finished. Let me just make sure. Based on the Word of God here. My time says I'm done. But just want to make sure that I'm, well yeah.

Withstanding, be firm in faith. How do I be firm in faith? I've got to trust that His righteousness is my righteousness. So then, this is important and next week, we'll see how we go. Verse 10, **<sup>10</sup>And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace [who imparts all blessing and favour], Who has called you to His [own] eternal glory in Christ Jesus, will Himself complete and make you what you ought to be, establish and ground you securely, and strengthen, and settle you. (1 Peter 5:10 AMPC)**

You know what's amazing about that scripture for me, that He's not talking about something that is going to happen in the future when you die. He's saying, "I'm going to establish you and settle you while you're on the earth". So even though you might have a time of testing and trying and tribulation, when it's done, when you've experienced this, He's going to come and settle you, establish you, grow you, make you shake, unshakable and steadfast. Let me tell you, when the lion comes to roar, and you find out that he can't get you, He settles you. You become established, you become secure. Because when he roared and he found out that he can't, he can't get you. You find out that other Christians come around, and they come and talk to you, and they say, "I don't believe that scripture, it didn't work for me. You know, I've heard many Christians, they, they believe this, and they end up dying, or they believe this and they didn't get the return of their money. Or they believe this. And I didn't see this or they, I've heard this kind of talk and you give people false hope and you, you give all kinds of things, and I've heard it all".

What do you think the answer to that is? They went from being the righteousness of Christ to being self-righteous. So, they never saw the end of it. They got devoured and now they blame God for being devoured. And they say, "Well, it can't be me".

Remember what I started with about relationships in the beginning. It's not me. It's not, it's someone else, it's someone else. It's someone else. It's God's fault. It's the Holy Spirit's fault. It's the Pastor's fault. It's the preacher's fault. It's that message that he preached, it's this one, it's that one. It's always someone else's fault. Hello. Ja.

You know, I know this about proper shepherds, Shepards that really care for God's people, I know this, I've been around them. I like to say that I identify as one of them. You know people want to identify as many things, I want to tell you I identify as a shepherd. Those of you who didn't get it the first time, you got it the second time.

When people persecute you when people say things against you when they have things happen in their lives and things don't go according to your prayers. According to what the Word of God says could be the outcome, should be the outcome. There're just many things that happen when you live with people for a long time. If you're a proper shepherd, you were always going to be evaluating whether you fed them right, you protected them right, you cared for them. You always going to go through that. Here's the challenge, though. The challenge is not to do that as a sole activity, questioning your calling, questioning your rightness or your wrongness. The thing about it is you have to always evaluate that under the mantle of the Holy Spirit, where He will show you and guide you and lead you and say, "Son, you could do better here. Let Me show you how to be a better shepherd here." So, if I was not the shepherd, according to the Chief Shepherd, what am I supposed to do about that? Go back? I can't go back. I can't undo what's been done. Come on. I got to just follow the Chief Shepherd, always, I got to follow the Chief Shepherd, I've got to follow Him. I've got to follow Him. Which is why I've always said to you, if you look at me as a man, and you have something that you want to say, "I can, I can find fault with you as a man." You can. I'm telling you now, you can. I'm close to perfect, but I'm not quite there. You will find fault with me. In any situation, you know, if you put a microscope against, you will find something that's flawed. Yes? There might be places in my life where you don't even need a big microscope. You can just look at it with clear eyes and say, "Hey, I can see Pastor John was behaving as a man there, not as a shepherd." Well, who do you think is going to hold me more responsible for that than you? The Chief Shepherd.

Now, if I truly have a heart that I've just revealed to you, then I will be continuously before God to make sure that I'm changing, that I'm doing better, that I'm more like the Chief Shepherd than I was yesterday. Do you think criticism from people will help me? Because what is criticism based on? Performance. Isn't it? Expectation. You let me down. Expectation and performance. I must criticize you now because you let me down. I must criticize you now because you showed yourself to be not as good as the Chief Shepherd. Okay.

Remember, they did that to Jesus. They brought a woman who was caught in adultery, and they brought it to Jesus. They said, "Okay, so you're the perfect rabbi, right?" Yeah. "So tell us what are we supposed to do? Moses law says, we must stone her on what do You say?" They thought they had Him they had the perfect opportunity to get Him." And so what He does is He bends down and He writes in the sand and then eventually when the woman is standing in front of Him and all of her accusers are gone. He says to her, "Where are your accusers?" And she says, "They're not here anymore." He says, "Neither do I accuse you. Go and sin no more."

Right? I have to make sure that at the very least in the basis of my life, that I live that I don't walk in the principle of accusation. Because the minute I walk in accusation, then everything is about the law and performance, then you cannot apply grace because the law demands an outcome. I have to walk in a place where any case anytime, anytime you hear words of accusation, you can know that that's not the Spirit of Christ because Jesus will never accuse you of anything. Remember what He said to the other people, "He who is without sin, throw the first stone." Remember what He said? "He that is without sin, let him cast the first stone." And so, they all left. Why? Because then you even know they came presenting themselves as the law keepers, they themselves were not up to the standard of performance of the law but they came with a spirit of accusation. But Jesus said, "I do not accuse you because there is no accusation here, only forgiveness."

I have to make sure that in my heart, I'm always operating in forgiveness, that I'm always operating in the love of God because that's how I know the Good Shepherd would behave. Because isn't that what the Father did for us? He said, I don't accuse you for your sin, I'm going to take care of your sin. I'm going to have Jesus die for your sin and then when you can't have any other way of doing it, all you've got to do is believe that He is and that I sent Him, and then you can be free from every accusation. Therefore, when your roaring lion wants to come against you, you can be sure it's going to sound like an accusation because he's wanting you to step away from your righteousness that you have in Christ because you can't pay for it, you can't do anything to improve it, there is nothing you can do to bring to God and say, "I've done better look, can I have more righteousness please?"

You either are or you're not. You are born into righteousness, or you are not. So, if you are, receive it, live by it, walk in it, use it, stand behind it. Don't let the devil accuse you of anything else. If he roars with your accusation, say, "No, I don't receive it. I stand behind the blood." You haven't confessed enough Words to get a financial return. "I'm leaving that up to Jesus." You haven't confessed enough to get healing. "I'm leaving that up to Jesus, I stand behind His righteousness." The minute I agree with you that I haven't confessed enough, I'm in a performance, self-righteous thing and I can't trust in Jesus. So, wherever I'm going wrong, I can't even look at it. I've got to say, I got to stand behind Jesus who is the Author and the Finisher of my faith and I receive that grace. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Glory to Jesus. Glory to Jesus. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

The minute you can walk like this. He pours His life into you. He pours His love out upon you because you say, "I'm receiving Jesus. I'm receiving Jesus. I'm receiving Jesus. I'm receiving what He paid for. I'm receiving everything He's given me. I'm receiving..." And He pours it out on you and suddenly you find that that thing that you've had accusation and shame and guilt, and all of that, and you haven't had the strength to defeat it, suddenly you find the strength building in you. And bit by bit, one day you say, "I can beat that thing. I'm beating it now. I'm beating it now. Ah, it's gone."

You say, "Ah, but I didn't do anything." No, He put His strength in you. He put His life in you, and you just go, "Ah, I'm free of it. I'm done here." And it works like that with money. "I couldn't get it. I couldn't get it. I couldn't get my breakthrough. I couldn't get a breakthrough." Trust in Him. Stand behind His righteousness, stand behind Him,



stand behind Him. "I'm getting it. I'm getting it. I'm getting it. Ah, I got it." "Ag but that was just a little bit." One breakthrough is enough to know that you can get lots and lots and lots and bigger and bigger and bigger.

And if the devil comes to you and says, "You can't get a breakthrough." "I already had one." Yeah, but that was just a loaf of bread that somebody gave you. "It's enough. It's enough. Even if it's a loaf of bread, it's enough." Shoo. Praise Jesus. His love is enough. His love is enough. His love is enough.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon you to receive His love that's enough.

Did you get something out of this today? I have preached myself happy today. Hallelujah. Glory to God. Stand with me, please. I managed to get through a whole message without taking my cowboy hat off. Breakthrough time. Hallelujah. Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, praise the Lord. Thank You, Jesus. Thank You, Jesus. Okay, Lord, okay.

I'm going to have you agree with me and then I'm going to pray a prayer for you that the Lord wants me to pray, so put your hand on your heart, like this, and just pray this with me and say, Jesus, I thank You that You died for me. I stand righteous because You are righteous. I receive my righteousness through Christ Jesus. Now, I stand whole and pure before You. There is nothing that can separate me from You, the love of God, in Jesus' name, amen.

I'll tell you what, hey, if you pray this prayer and you just say this simple declaration every day, you will see the power of how this declaration can work in your life; I receive Your righteousness, nothing can separate me from Your love. Boom. Breakthrough. Breakthrough. Hallelujah.

And so, the Lord wanted me to pray this over you this morning; that you would walk in a complete and full revelation of His love, that you will understand that neither height nor depth nor breadth – there is nothing that can separate you from the love of God. That's the book of Ephesians. Nothing can separate you from the love of God. There is nothing that you can do that can separate you from the love of God, only your choice. Not your actions, only your choice. So now, choose to not be separated from the love of God. Choose it now. Just choose it now; that you will not be separated from the love of God.

Father, I pray that as this revelation grows in Your people, they will walk in ever-increasing freedom and ever-increasing peace and ever-increasing knowledge of the wonder of Your blessing and favour that You bring upon Your people because You love them. Not because of how well we perform, but because You love us. And, so, I pray, Father, that as they go out into the world, it is my prayer just like Jesus prayed, that You don't take them out of the world but that You save them from the evil one who will try and devour their walk with You so that he can get them and steal their lives. I pray, Father, that their revelation and Your love will continue to hold them and protect them and keep them and bring them to a higher level in every way every day, in Jesus' name.

Do you receive that prayer? Hallelujah. Then say amen. I would like someone to transcribe this prayer, the two prayers that I've prayed, and I would like to have it sent out on WhatsApp, social media, whatever, because I really feel by the Holy Spirit we've got to make a declaration of this prayer even this week before the weekend so whatever God's got for us this weekend, we're ready to walk straight into it. Amen. Hallelujah.

There's Message Moments at 5 o'clock this afternoon. It will be a joy time. And then, you would have received this card and so we want to just give you more opportunity to bring your gift to the body of Christ, serve in some way so that you can put the apron of humility on. Please fill it out, hand it in, we'll contact you. This is not an obligation; this is whatever God has for you in your future. Amen. Okay, everybody, thank you for coming to church! Bye.