

20 August 2023

**Celebration and Relationships Part 9: Intentional Celebration of Design and Desire
Pastor John Bendixen (WTB)**

Scripture reference: Ephesians 3:8-9 (NKJV)

And Father, we thank You for the message that You bring now, through a messenger, Your messenger, our spiritual leader, Lord. We are following him as he is following Christ, Lord, sons and daughters of this house. We are not found in the field of the fatherless, as Your Word says, but we have a Heavenly Father, and we have a spiritual Father to many of us. And we receive the word that comes from him today, Lord. We let it cut our heart, we let it pierce our heart and penetrate our heart, Lord. Oh, we let Your Word Lord, burn like fire Lord. Everything in us today, everything Lord. We ask no questions. Our minds are quiet, our emotions are quiet, and we thank You for Your anointing today on our very precious spiritual leader that we love so much. We love you, Pastor John, come and bring us the truth that we love, too. In Jesus' name, we all say, Amen.

Pastor John:

Praise Jesus. Praise Jesus. Glory to the Name of the Lord. You know, when you give praise to Jesus, you are not just filling empty seconds in a church service. We are not just doing some religious practice, and proving to everybody else that we can also speak sounds of praise. When we praise Jesus, we are praising Him from our hearts. We are praising Him because we love Him. We are praising Him because together our praises do much more together than even when we praise individually. Hallelujah. Glory to Jesus.

Well, I'm very glad you came today, truly. I am grateful that you are here. You are His body. You are His people, and it's a marvellous thing to witness what God does in people's lives and in your lives. It's a truly remarkable, amazing thing, to see Jesus at work in all of you. Hallelujah. So, before you sit down, greet a couple of people and say, "I'm glad you're here today. Please don't go away. Please stay." Thank you, guys. Thank you. Thank you. Hallelujah.

Well, I refuse to let the devil steal my opportunity to minister to you through anything that he might try to do to my body. He has been trying to do it the whole week, and I refuse to let him do it the whole week. Hallelujah. So, in my hands here, I have a book that was wonderfully done. The project leader for this was Jeanine, and I thank Jeanine. She had a number of people helping her - Hein and Jeanine, thank you.

Actually, we had this book done it's called *The Witness*. We had this book done in January. It was ready in February because I wanted Brother Jerry, Brother Joe, and the people that I hold myself accountable to spiritually and in all of my human living. I wanted them to know the fullness and the scope of what our ministry does. And so, it's the witness. It's a witness of what God has done in our ministry and is doing in our ministry. So, this is up to date as of the end of 2022. I'm inviting all of you, those that are here this morning and those that are not, that are maybe watching by digital platform; I'm inviting you next Saturday afternoon for a *Boerewors braaivleis*, outside here by the church around half past 12, one o'clock, please come for a *Boerewors braaivleis*. And come and have some fellowship with us together. And then

afterwards, we will have a meeting where I will not read the whole book to you because this book has got a lot of testimonies in it and a lot of personal things in here of how God has changed people's lives and the things that we have been doing.

But I will take the framework of what's in here and I will share it with you by way of the digital screen. They're reformatting it for me as they have already started to reformat it so that it can fit the screen. And we can go through the highlights of the different things that God has done in the ministry. Some of it has been going on for more than 20 years. Some of it is more recent. But I think it's appropriate for you to know just how extensively God has used you, used us, and made a mark on the earth through us. He has. He's made a mark on this earth through us. Our lives are not in vain. Our lives have meaning and purpose and they have already established a witness. Amen. "Can I give this to you, Empie?" *[Pastor John handing the book to Empie]*.

When we're done next Saturday, we'll make a version of that, maybe the full version. I've spoken to them about it and we will make it available on the website, on the Internet, so that it doesn't... It's like almost, if you had it in that format, it's almost a gigabyte of data because of all the pictures and all the stuff. So, we don't want you to download that necessarily if it's going to cost you money. But you will be able to view it and look through it at your leisure and read the testimonies and all those kinds of things. I think that'll be cool, don't you think so? Amen.

God is also doing something and we are preparing. We are preparing ourselves for what God is doing for this ministry. We are going to the maximum and we're stepping up and stepping in and we're going to the highest level attainable. Amen. And so, we are at work. We are extremely focused. We have a deadline of a whole new way that I believe God is showing us that we can touch the world. And I mean the whole world. The whole world. In a way that would be pleasing to Him. Amen. Hallelujah.

So, just because I'm quiet with my voice doesn't mean to say I'm not passionate about something. I'm just aware that if I start speaking too loudly then I might not get through the service. Hallelujah. Amen. So, that you're going to have to help me preach this morning with a lot of amens. Otherwise, I will think that my quiet voice is impacting you. No. Okay, good. Thank you. Praise Jesus.

He, Jesus, is faithful to the Father. He's faithful to Their words that they spoke, before the beginning of the formation of the earth. He is faithful to everything that was in the heart of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. He is faithful to complete and accomplish everything that was spoken, that was the desire of all of them. Everything. He is faithful to it. It is a privilege for us to know Jesus and to have Jesus live in us. Have the Father live in us because of Jesus. Have the Holy Spirit in our lives working with us, helping us because of Jesus. Where would you and I be without Jesus?

It's an honour and a privilege to know Jesus and to be able to speak the name of Jesus without profanity and without being vainglorious about it. It's a privilege to know Jesus. It's a wonderful, beautiful, amazing thing to be called a Son of God. It's a true blessing without comparison. There is nothing that can compare with having

the life of Jesus inside of you. There is nothing on this earth, there is nothing in eternity that can come close to actually having this understanding that the Most High God is in you and me. Wow.

It's such an amazing thing to me that when I look into your faces and I observe the fact that you've come to church, that you do so not because of me. I mean, you might like me and I'm very glad that you like me and Pastor Sharon. I'm really glad you like us. It makes it harder if we don't like each other. But hard is okay, you know, for a while.

So, I'm glad that you like us and we like each other, but it's more important that you're here because of Jesus because He's the One that did everything and when we see Jesus in each other it's truly an amazing thing. It's truly a miraculous thing. It's really, it's mind-boggling, actually, you know, that I can stand here and look at all of you and I see Jesus everywhere because you're here because of Jesus. Hallelujah.

I want to show you a picture. Can we have the first slide up, please?



This little baby is just a stock photo that we got off the internet. This little baby is a month old. A month old. I don't know if it's male or female. It can identify with whatever, at a month old, you know. [*Congregation laughs*] I don't know. But I have a question for you as you look at this photograph. Do you think that this baby has any idea of what it has been designed to do, what its destiny is? Do you think it cares? It has no care. It has no thought about what am I designed for, what is my destiny. It has a very clear understanding of desire at a very basic level. [*Pastor John cries like a baby*] Feed me. [*Pastor John cries like a baby*] I don't know what's wrong. Mommy, Daddy comes along - wet nappy. Oh, that's the problem. [*Pastor John cries like a baby*] What's wrong now? Still doesn't know. Something's wrong and all it can do is just make a noise. I don't even know if it's desire, maybe it's just human instinct; feed me, dry me, protect me, make me feel good. Right?

You can have any kind of conversation you'd like with this little thing. It knows nothing of which you speak. Right? It's just got everything in it for whatever God has made it to be - it already has it. The moment it was conceived as a spirit to come to the earth, this little thing already had all of the DNA, all of the everything that it needed to be what God wanted it to be. At this stage, this little thing doesn't even know that God birthed it. This little thing doesn't even know whether the parents are

good or bad, whether the parents are financially capable or not. All it knows; make a noise when things are not good. It's very basic. There's not much you can say to this little thing. Right?

Can I have the next picture, please?



What about this little guy? I don't even know if it's a guy or whatever. Just because it's got a thing, it could be a little girl, I don't know. Two years old. This little thing is two years old. Do you think that at two years old that this little person is becoming familiar with what desire is? Hey? It still doesn't know what destiny is, but it does know, somewhat, about what desire is.

So, how does this little two-year-old get to understand what its desire is? Well, if you're a parent that is rewarded this little thing with sweets, then it will be understood that if I get my parents through my crying to tell me to stop crying, that I can get rewarded with a sweet, then I'm going to cry so that they can tell me to stop crying so that I can get a sweet. And if you think a two-year-old doesn't know that already, you are mistaken.

At two years old, they already know how to manipulate circumstances to fulfil desires that have been awakened. If you don't feed it sweets, it doesn't know what it desires, as far as sweets are concerned. At a very basic level, this little thing is beginning to understand desire. It doesn't know its designer, creator, or what it's designed for. At this point in time, it really only is beginning to be awakened to desire. Yes? At a very basic level. Can I have the next slide, please?



This is a bunch of kids who I would say is between two years old and four years old, five years old maybe, somewhere like that. What do you think has happened with all of these kids in the transition from being one month old to being this age? What do you think their desire is right at this moment? Fun, right? At this moment in time, I'm only all about fun. Please can I have fun? I'm going to probably suggest they're not yet at school going age, maybe they are maybe they're on the borderline. So, maybe they don't even know what school is. Maybe parents are beginning to teach them the basics of life. Maybe there's a punishment-reward system that they're beginning to become familiar with.

Desires have definitely been awakened to some things and not to other things. Certainly, desire has been awakened to fun. I can speak for boys because I had raised boys. I don't know if it's like this for girls, but boys are not so cared about whether they bathe at night or not, as long as I can keep having fun. Right? I mean, you know, there's a whole list of things that they want to do before they have to do the things that they have to do. And if they have to do the things that they have to do, can never have to come on their plate, that's also okay let's just do what we want to do. At this age. Yes? I just want to do what I want. I want to have fun. Don't tell me what I have to do. But you begin to start to understand at this age already that there are some things that you have to do and you go and get to do the things you want to do until you do the things you have to do.

You don't fully understand why it's like that, you don't understand why people make you do that. You don't really understand the fullness of what responsibility is and how they're teaching you to take responsibility. But you are just driven by desire, not by what they're trying to teach you. Come on. Yes, you agree with me? I'm just painting a broad picture for you. Next photograph, please.



What about this little guy? Do you think he's beginning to contemplate some stuff? Maybe. He's beginning to realise there are a few things going on in life here and I'm not sure what it is yet, but okay. Do you think he's sitting there? He's there for the posing of the picture, but I'm talking about the story that it tells. Do you think he's sitting there like that because he wants to sit there? Or do you think he's sitting there because someone told him to sit there? Do you think that's his desire? Or do you think that's someone else's desire? It's someone else's desire that he be responsible and sit there. Right? Next slide, please.



This is ten years old. What do you think about this ten-year-old little girl? What do you think is happening in her world at ten years old? Do you think she understands desire? Definitely. Do you think she's beginning to understand that life is a lot more complicated than just what I want to do and what I have to do? She's already beginning to explore the idea that I'm different to other people and my difference is already positioning me in life. She doesn't necessarily understand destiny. She doesn't understand, necessarily, who created her, other than if she's told by someone who knows who the Creator is and who God is that maybe she's actually destined for something great and she's called to something great.

If someone's telling her at that age then she starts to believe it. If no one's telling her, she's already beginning to wonder what life's all about, but she's prepared to put up with her questions because she can still have fun. Right? I think I have one more slide left.



What about these kids here, together? I mean, you know, there's a variety of ages here. They're all prepared to put up with each other's differences because they're young enough to put up with each other's differences because they're all having fun together. At different ages here, different kinds of things stimulate them. Right? So, if I can just take these two little ones in the front here, it seems to me that one of them is a bit younger than the other one. So, this one over here with the yellow bucket, I mean, pretty soon he's going to be, had enough of playing in the sand. The other little guy with the orange truck in front of him, he can probably play there for hours. Especially he'll play there for hours if the older person is playing with him because

the older person can do stuff that he can't do yet and it'll help him learn. Yes? So, their desires are at a different level.

I'd say this little guy with the yellow bucket, he's probably beginning to learn about his place in life. The young one skipping at the back there. The one playing with the ball. I mean, they seem to be a little bit older. Their life is beginning to get formed by their activities. Their activities, their desires, these things are beginning to change them. Amen.

So, what happens to you when you get born again? At what stage of your life do you get born again at? Which one of those kids does your spirit man look like when you get born again? Come on. A little one-month-old baby. Even smaller than that. But let's use it for this purpose. Your spirit man, when you get born again, looks like that little baby. That's perfect. God created your spirit man with a destiny, with a design, with everything that you need. It's already created. But what do you know? What do you know spiritually?

You are perfectly made, but you know nothing. All you need, all you know is to cry. You don't think spirit beings cry? Well, they do. Have you ever seen someone who's just got born again? It's like their whole world has changed. Everything's new. It's like life is a whole new everything. And it's like they ask God for something and they get it. And it's like they go through life and it's like a dream. They can't wait to come to church. They can't wait for the doors to open. Why? Because this is where they get food. This is where they get their nappies changed. They can't wait to be with other Christians because when they talk to other Christians, you know, it helps them burp them, dry them, feed them. And it's like this whole world is so different for them. And then they get to two years old and they're beginning to understand that other Christians have got other ideas and other identities and other gifts. And they begin to understand that there's a whole lot of stuff going on in church life. Good or bad, it doesn't matter. They are learning whatever the body's teaching them. And if you've got a body, a church that is rewarding punishment and reward because of behaviour, they're going to learn that. And they're going to learn that if I start screaming in a certain way, I get rewarded. If I scream in a different way, I get punished.

And they start to learn things, good or bad, whether the parents are good or bad, they learn whatever's happening in the body, whatever's happening in the church. And then they get older, they start to play games, they still have a lot of fun, but they're beginning to realise that there's some things that they do that God doesn't approve of and the church doesn't approve of it. And now the lines get blurred because, "Is it society?"- if I'm talking about a normal kid, I mean a natural-born kid- is it society that's influencing my parents to dictate my behaviour, or is it my parents that are telling me how I should behave?

And they start to begin to understand that when people come into the house, my parents behave in a certain way and when they're not in the house, my parents behave in a different way. And so, they begin to learn that is this a society pressure or is this a parenting? And so, they learn that same thing in the church. And then as they get older, they begin to learn and they begin to realise that actually as your spirit man is being fed and you are active and you are growing, God begins to use you and you begin to be a necessary part of the body.

Now I have another question for you. Do you think it's possible for Christians to get born again, become little and stay little? You see spiritually you can stay little like that or you can spiritually grow up. Would it surprise you if I told you that the body of Christ worldwide is full of one-month-old babies and two years old babies but they're sixty years old in their body or forty or fifty? So, they bring intelligence, intellect, they bring all kinds of grown-up stuff to the church but their spirit man, that part that is communicating with God, that's living with God and comes into the church is behaving like a baby. *[Pastor John cries like a baby]* Feed me. *[Pastor John cries like a baby]* Dry me. *[Pastor John cries like a baby]* Where's my sweetie? Would it surprise you if I tell you that most people go to church on Sundays because they get sweeties?

Yeah, they get spiritual sweeties. Let me make you feel good. Let me burp you. Let me dry you. Let me give you a sweetie so you come back next Sunday for another sweetie. Do you know what they're learning? They're learning that church has a punishment and reward - it's not God, it's the church. Okay, I'm picking up from last Sunday. I'd like to talk to you a little bit about - about me. I was once a month old. I did all of the things that a month-old baby does. When I was a month old, before I was a month old, God already had a design for my life. He had a destiny for my life. He had a plan for my life, for me. What did I know about that when I was a month old? I knew nothing. Did it change what God planned for me? So, the only variable from the design to the birth was that now there are parents that are influenced by society and they have the opportunity to impact my design and have an impact on my desires and have an impact on my destiny. Right?

So, I grow up in a church, I grew up in a Pentecostal church. I grow up in a church where the people are speaking in tongues. But I also grow up in a church, in a society where they demanded that women wear things on their heads. Women were not allowed to wear pants. They were not allowed to wear makeup or jewellery. I mean, there was a whole lot of rules in the church. In my spirit man, as I was growing up, I rejected those rules because I saw the impact of what those rules did to people.

And I used to visit with families because I had kids that I would become friendly with in the church, and then I would go to people's homes and I would be, let's say, an eight-year-old boy, a ten-year-old boy, a twelve-year-old boy. And I'd be visiting people's homes, and as a boy, I discovered that what was happening in the home and what was being shown off in the church were two different things. It was also happening in my home. What was happening in my home was very different to what was happening by my parents in the church. So then I began to understand that the rules and the relationship were two different things and that the church was rewarding the adherents to rules, but they didn't really care about the relationship. So, I grew up kicking against rules but I didn't want to kick against rules so badly that I couldn't have a relationship with God because my spirit man was drawing me to my Designer. My spirit man was drawing me to my Creator. My spirit man that was alive to God was drawing me to Him. And so, even though the rules were really not something that I was enjoying, my spirit man was calling to my Creator, and my spirit man was calling to my purpose.

I couldn't have told you that when I was eight or ten or whatever. At that age, put a soccer ball at my feet, a racket in my hand, a cricket ball in my hand, you name it, you know, marbles, please. Let's play for marbles. Come on. I mean, I don't know if that exists in the modern-day world anymore, but that was me - growing up, you know. But I also had this love for God. I couldn't have explained it to you, but I knew it was there. Okay, so over the years, God says to me, "The more you give your attention to Me John, the more you give your thought process, your words, your world, the more you give to Me, I'm going to let the desire that's in you draw you closer to your plan, closer to your purpose, because you're drawing closer to Me." Come on. The closer you get to your Creator and your Designer, the closer you're going to understand what His plan for you was. Most parents don't want to let go of their kids into God's purpose and plan because they take personal accreditation for what their kids become, and they want to bask in the glory of the achievements of their children. Meantime God only gave you your kids to look after for a short time so that God can lead them to their purpose and their plan. Amen.

Say what you want about it, but whether it's fortunate or unfortunate, it is unfortunate that in my family the behaviour was so bad that it had such a big impact on me. The difference between what God said life should be, how they lived, and the rules that they broke in the church ultimately tore the family apart, and tore us out of the church. It certainly accelerated my press into a relationship with God more than it wanted me to press into the ways of the church.

So, I'm now much older. I want to ask you, what do you think has happened to my desire all these years later? What is happening to my desire meter? I have human desires and I have spiritual desires. The path that I choose of human desire or spiritual desires is going to dictate what happens overall in my life. As I press into God for spiritual desires, He reveals more and more of my plan and my purpose. What about if I stand between two worlds, my human desire and my spiritual desire, and I say, "I'm going to give myself some to spiritual and I'm going to give myself some to natural." What do you think is going to happen to the way that I live my life? On the one hand, I'm going to be pulled towards what my purpose is. On another hand, I'm going to be pulled to what my human desires want and call me to feed it.

This is the thing that the Apostle Paul writes about in the book of Romans when he says, "The things that I want to do I find myself not being able to do them, the things I don't want to do I find myself doing them" because my human body wants to be fulfilled in its desire, but my spirit man is calling me to my Creator. My spirit man is calling me to the plan and the purpose that God has for my life. So, my spirit man, like that five-year-old, that one-month-old little kid, is born with the capacity for desire. Doesn't know what to do with the desire yet, but it desires God. As the body grows older and it gets more familiar and more comfortable with the environment, the little kid starts to realize that it's got influence. That it's not just influenced. It's got influence. And so, it begins to influence its environment to get what it wants. Right? So, it's following its desire. What does your spirit man want? Your spirit man is saying, "Feed me, protect me, nurture me," because when I grow up, I will be strong enough to tell your natural man to be quiet when it needs to be quiet.

Most Christians are happy with a pizza once a week and a milkshake, at church if you will, please. They don't want to have broccoli, and they don't want to have a

salad with tomato and carrots in it and they don't want to have healthy micronutrients. They want to eat pizza and milkshakes when they come to church because I want to feel good when I leave here. I want to feel like I've been, my desires have been met.

But, actually what's happening is that they are responding to their ability to influence their environment. If I don't get what I want from this church, I'll go to another one. If I don't get from this church what I need, I won't tithe here anymore, I won't give my money here, I won't do this, I won't do that because I'm not comfortable with what's being preached here. I'm not comfortable with what's going on here because my desire is not being met. And so, what happens is that church has become a competition of who can serve the best pizzas and the best milkshakes every Sunday; with sound, with messages, with all kinds of organisation and structure. You can shout me down because I'm preaching really good.

So, when you come into church I have a desire. What is happening to my desire now? When I come to church I'm not coming to you with my human desire. If I am, God should remove me. Unfortunately, there are a lot of churches that are filled with leaders that are influenced by other people's desires to get what they want, so they deliver what the other people desire. I'm not even putting the blame on them to say they desire it but maybe they do, you know, but let's just say they've got a good desire but other people say, "Don't do this, you must do this, we want that. Otherwise, you don't get your vision done." Right? And so churches are competing for bodies in chairs and they're competing for the money that people bring with them when they get bums in seats, and now it's even gone further to be on a digital platform; if I can get more eyeballs and more likes and more views then I'm doing the right thing.

So, let's keep talking about me. If I am in the presence of God and I'm seeking God for what my design is, my calling is, what God wants me to do, then my spirit man says, "You've got to obey the Father and now spiritually, John, we have to activate your gift and your calling through your body, through your mind." The spirit man must tell you what to do. The stronger my spirit man becomes, the more my mind and my body get in line with what my spirit man is saying. Right? So, I was confronted with that in our church in around about 2005, 2007, 2008 somewhere around about there. All of those years probably because the world was exploding with seeker-friendly churches.

And people were flocking to the seeker-friendly churches. They were building big buildings. They had thousands and thousands of people going there. They had this amazing music. They changed their language to draw people into the church. Seeker friendly. And one of the things that I was confronted with was home cells. Everybody's doing home cells. And so, I went to the Lord and I was really conflicted about it because who doesn't want a church full of people? Because the more people you have, the more you can influence. But now we're talking about desire. If I desire a church full of people, that doesn't mean to say that my spirit man's desire is leading me. Come on now. I have to stay walking with God so that my desire that is my spirit man, that is connected to my Creator, my Designer, that has a destiny for me is telling me what my body must do, what my soul must do, what my mind must do, and what words must come out of my mouth. And who God now can bring around me

because of words coming out of my mouth, because of how God positions me. Right?

So, if I stand here and I talk to you about the things that I'm talking to you about, and they are different to what other churches are saying and what other Christians are saying, what must I do about my desire? Come on. I can't just switch off my spiritual desire because God is telling me, "John, I want you to say this. I want your gift to work. I want you to flow this way. I want you to be this way. I want you to say it like this." My desire is lining up with Him. Right? So, people used to hear me say this many times. I know how to build a big church because I know how to market. I came from a marketing world. I came from an executive position in the business world, sales, and marketing. I know how to put things in place to make something work for the people. I knew it then. And the Lord said to me, "You do that, you're disobeying me, John. I want you to follow Me." My spirit man's desire was overriding and overwhelming my natural man's desire. What kind of man do you want standing here? Come, talk to me.

Do you want me to be hearing what God's plan is for me to speak or do you just want to hear my soul man? Do you just want to hear my natural man or do you want to hear what spirit man says? *[Congregation replying spirit man]* Okay, I'm going to reverse the question. What do you think God wants from you to be with everybody else around you? He doesn't want you to be the best soul man that you can be, the best natural man that you can be. He wants you to be spirit man with spirit man design, with spirit man gifting, with spirit man destiny. He wants you to be that. He wants you to get out of spiritual nappies, start running around and have fun in the church. Because in the process of having fun in the church, you're going to eventually learn, wait a minute, I have a place.

There are things I've got to learn here. I've got to learn responsibility and fun. I've got to learn all of the things that God wants me to learn. So, the journey is that we have fun but that the journey is that we also have responsibility. So, now I'm a grown-up, adult male, a man in my natural. Do you think that I'm still capable of having fun? I'm not a ten-year-old running around anymore, playing marbles. Thank God. If you catch me playing marbles, come and talk to Pastor Sharon and have me committed, because you know, I've lost marbles. *[Pastor John and congregation laughing]*

So, as a natural man, I'm no longer doing the things a ten-year-old is doing. I'm doing things that a grown-up man's doing. I ride motorbikes, I ride bicycles, I get on aeroplanes, and I do things. Yes? So, my desires have changed. But what's happened is that over the years, my spirit man desires and my natural man desires have come into a way where my spirit man is leading my natural man. So, God didn't want me to stop having desires. He wanted to dictate what my desires are.

So, come on now, I hope I'm answering some questions for you here today. What kind of desires do you think Abraham had compared to me? I mean, Abraham lived in a time when there were no aeroplanes. There was no 29" dual suspension mountain bike. There was no BMW 1200 GS or 1250, 1290 whatever it is that you want to ride. There were no things like that. So, what do you think Abraham desired? He was in an environment where it was probably more important for him to have trustworthy, loyal people around him so that they could live on a scale of productivity

and peace. Right? No war. So, he would pursue peace. How do I know that? Well, when Lot and Abraham and their people were competing with each other, they were having strife; he said, "Come, let's stop the strife. You go one place, I'll go another way. I don't want strife." I can say for sure, just like me, Abraham didn't want strife. He wanted peace.

So, he didn't have all the toys, but he had natural desires based on what God called him. And then when God talked to him and said, "I'm going to bless you and I'm going to prosper you" and all that, he says, "What use is all of this money if I don't have a seed that I can give it to?" What was he telling God? His desire. So, now Abraham, father of our faith, that desire, was it in him by God or was it his natural man? God put it in him as a natural man, but it was his walk with God that was making these desires come out.

So, if I have a desire for a motor car that God places in my heart, He's responding to where my natural world lives - for me to have things that are tools for me in my natural world. He's not making a car the object of my desire. He's not making houses the object of my desire. He says, "I know you need it. I'm going to give it to you. You don't even have to fuss about it if you put Me as the object of your desire. I will take care of all of those things you desire in the natural world because you're not putting those things more important than My stuff." So, the whole thing that's happening with faith in the church, is that people say, "I want to use faith to get stuff." Why? Use your faith to connect with Him. Let Him feed your spirit man. Let Him feed us and then your desires will be what He wants them to be. And then you will just speak, "House, you are needed. God wants me to have you. Come to me. Come to me. Car, come to me. Aeroplanes, come to me. I have need of them. God wants me to have them. Relationships, let them be what they must be."

All of you sitting here today, you think you're just here by chance? You're not here by chance. You're here because God put a desire in your heart to come here because He wanted you to have someone that will talk this kind of stuff to you. And so He's put in you a desire to have a relationship with these people in this church because this church is designed and created by Him to do stuff. Not to be like other churches. He's called us to be us. Come on.

I mean, you go into the shops, the world wants to tell you what kind of jeans you should wear because that's the vogue thing to wear. Right? There's some stuff that I have to do as a pastor in the church that I know if I don't do those stuff, people don't come to church. It's the fashion world telling us what we must do in church. It just makes some sense, too. Like, you've got to come with clothes on to church, please. You know, whether you wear jeans or you wear shorts, I mean, at least wear clothes. And so, then if we have a nice building, nice lights, we have all these things, you know, that's become a minimum requirement - to have church. If we make church buildings and the greater the buildings, the greater the light show, the greater the music, if we make these things our desire, we are lost in a world of rules.

Because the rules may not be telling us to put things on our heads. The rules might not be telling us that we can't wear pants or can't wear makeup, but the rules have just changed now to be other rules. So, I must wear something when I come to church and I must have a building, but if I make this the object of my calling, you and

I are both lost. So, what's my desire? To talk to you like this. So, what is the calling that God's got on my heart and in my life and what is my desire? My desire is to have relationships with you, to talk the kind of truth to you, to be the kind of leader to you that you can observe my life, and you can be around me and see the mistakes I make and the good things I do. And if you see me making mistakes, I don't mind that so much. As long as you don't judge me for my mistakes because you don't want me to judge you for yours. Right? So, if we have a love relationship, you come and talk to me, then I can explain to you how you're wrong.

So, if a ten-year-old is going to go and explain to Mom and Dad that they're wrong, what do you think Mom and Dad are going to say to ten years old? "I understand how you feel. I understand your perspective. I recognise that you have something that you want to say. But no, you're going to do what I tell you." So, what God has put in me to do is He says, "John, you've got to lead spiritually, not govern." The Bible says a spiritual leader must not lord over the sheep or over the people. My job is not to lord over you or govern you, my job is to lead you. How? Through the words that are spoken, through the lifestyle that we lead and the way that we develop together as a people. Look at the people around you. That's leadership in action. Not just my influence on you, but the way that you've received the Word and you're living the Word and you're living the Word amongst each other. It's the way God wanted us to live as a church. Hallelujah. Glory to God.

So, what do you all have to say about this? I didn't even switch my timer on this morning, so you're just going to have to be here all day. I'm going to switch it on now. You know, the Apostle Paul, he writes this in Ephesians 3 verse 8. **⁸ To me, who am less than the least of all the saints. ⁸ To me, who am less than the least of all the saints. This grace was given. This grace was given that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. ⁹ And to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Christ Jesus (Ephesians 3:8-9 NKJV).** Do you know what he's saying? "I recognise that actually, I have no place but to follow my desire that He gave me. The desire that He gave me is to go preach to the Gentiles and explain the mystery to them. I have a strong desire to do that. But in my natural man, I recognise I am less than the least." Come on now.

I know that here in this congregation there are people much more intelligent than me. There are much more people, more educated than me. There are people that have got more raw talent than me. It's likely that there are people here that can communicate better than me. So, I can say with confidence that perhaps I am the less of the least. That doesn't change what God's desire is in me and it doesn't change what He created and He designed me to be, and you can't change that either. What you can do is you can see and say, "Hey Lord, I recognise that Jesus died for this church." All churches, Jesus died for, and He has chosen people to come and reveal mysteries that have been hidden, to come and reveal them.

And so, He's asked me to be one such person to come and reveal. Do you feel like you get revelation every week? Yes? And so, God has called me with a woman. You know, I've told you many times before that I think Pastor Sharon, I mean, we've been married 43 years, going 44 years. I think she's the most beautiful, most sexy, most classy, most amazing woman I know. But the biggest thing that drew me to her was

that she loved Jesus so much. I mean, she did things that just blew my mind. She used to drive, she used to be in sales, she had a sales car, a Ford Cortina when I met her, and she used to drive on the open roads and she used to have a Bible. She used to drive texting. Those days her texting was reading the Bible while she was driving. She was so hungry for God that she didn't have a tape recorder or tapes or anything. But she said, "I can't drive that many hours from Joburg to Bloemfontein."

Which is where I know it happened at least once. "You can't drive for four or five hours to Bloemfontein in this car and not have the Word of God being in my heart. So, I'm going to put it on my steering wheel and read it out loud to myself because I love Jesus so much. I want His Word in me so much." Do you still get that about her? That she loves Jesus? That's what I fell in love with. And when I met her, I said to her, "Now, babes, I want to tell you that I'm going to be..." Maybe I didn't call her babe then. I don't know. I probably did. But, you know, I said to her, "I'm called to preach and teach. I'm going to be a pastor of a church, and so you have to know this, that if you're going to marry me, we're going to be doing this in our lives." And she had to come to terms with that because that's not what she wanted. But she loved me too much already by then.

But you know what she fell in love with? Not because I was such a hunk of a man and sexy and all that kind of stuff, and I was all that. Tell me a man who doesn't think that about himself and I'll show you a man who's hiding, yeah. But that's not the only reason she fell in love with me, she fell in love with me because I was passionate about Jesus because I love Jesus, and there was a drawing of our lives together. Now listen, I don't care why you married each other. Make it from now onwards that you want to fall in love with the Christ, the passion, the desire that is in each of you for God. Because that will sustain you, that will grow you, that will cause fulfilment to come into your life that you can't even imagine how great it is. I'm preaching really good today, croaky voice and all. Hallelujah. Praise Jesus.

Right now the anointing of the Holy Spirit is in this room. He has been here for some time already. The Word is being preached is with power of the Holy Spirit, and His power is in these words to change your desires so that you don't run after the desires of your natural man. That you recognise the desires of the natural man and say, "I'm going to pursue the desires of my spirit man more than my natural man." I want to tell you something else I desire. I don't desire to help you make the big decisions in your life.

Contrary to what you may think, I don't desire that. I desire that you are mature spiritually, that you make decisions for yourself with your spirit man being mature, grown-up dictating to your natural man what are the decisions you must make. But I recognise that while we are all growing in the counsel of much there is wisdom. I recognise that if we are respecting and understanding spirit life in each other, we come to a much better decision. Because we know we're dealing with the desires of the natural man that want to tell us which to go all the time because we've stimulated that desire for so long. Now we want our spirit man to lead us and we are confused half the time because desire is a powerful thing and it's a powerful motivator. And if you think the devil is not a master at triggering desires in you, then you already don't know the enemy and then it tells me already that you're in danger zone. You know, "Highway to the danger zone." *[Pastor John sings]* Top Gun. If you didn't know that.

First Top Gun, many years ago. I don't know if it was, was it in the second Top Gun? I don't know.

Anyway, it's a highway to the danger zone. If you don't know that the devil knows how to trigger all your desires. Hey, come on now. Let's talk about this for just a few more minutes. What do you think the Bible means when it says that the devil will present himself to you as an angel of light? What do you think that is? The angel of light is the one that comes to you to stimulate your desire, and it looks like it's the right thing to do. Otherwise, you wouldn't do it if you didn't think it was the right thing to do. If you had an angel saying to you, "You're doing the wrong thing." You think, if that angel showed up, I promise you, you would not do it.

Because he would come with a divine light and a divine authority and he'd say, "Stop." "Yes, Sir." Because God's authority would be there. But they're not designed to do that. And so, if the devil comes to you with a desire as an angel of the light as it looks like the right thing to you, what do you think you're going to do? Unless you know the difference between the true truth of God and the angel of light, you're not going to know what's going to be the difference. Other than you know what passionate desire feels like. I'm preaching so good. And who, who can tell you that you are not passionate and you have a strong desire for something? And when you've given yourself over to passion and desire, whatever that looks like in your life. If you've given yourself to that all of your life and now an angel of light comes and says, "This is the right thing to do." And it triggers the same passion and desire in you, who do you think you're going to listen to?

Just note what I've said there because it now means that you're the four months, you're the four-week-old, one-month-old or the two-year-old kid and someone's coming to pull you away with a sweetie. Oh well, I'm used to doing whatever the sweetie says I must. If it's a sweetie, then it's good. Ja ne? "Oh, I'm getting a sweetie. I'll do that." Wow. Wow. I didn't get through half of what I wanted to preach today. I mean, I did. I think I got through half of what I planned to preach. The other stuff was just by the Holy Spirit today. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Praise Jesus. Praise Jesus. Praise Jesus. Praise Jesus. Praise Jesus.

So, if you desire, if you're a young person and you desire to have a relationship with the opposite sex, is that a good thing? Yes, it's a good thing. How do you think the devil is going to trigger that desire in a soul, natural person? He or she is beautiful, pretty, talks my language, we vibe together, we like the same music. Hey, lekka lekka, lekka lekka. But now let's take the same desire and submit it to God. So, what is He going to say? He's going to say, "Son, daughter, I want to fill the desire of your heart. But I don't want just to fill it for the natural things. I want to fill it with the same design, the same destiny, the same calling, and the same gifts that I placed in you from when you were born. I want you to be elevated in your companionship. I don't want it to deflect and to pull away from what I called you, created you, designed you for." Now we begin to have relationships with a different desires. I desire to pursue God in the relationship, not just the natural man.

So, like I always say, you've got to like the natural man because that's what you've got to live with. But you should have a purpose and a desire of God's eternal plan for you to be fulfilled in that relationship. Some people don't have the choice to start like

that because they already started and now they've got to readjust. Thank God there's an anointing on the Word of God to help make the adjustment. His grace is here for that adjustment. His anointing and His words and these things are here to change desires so that you come with adjustments. But if you're starting out, rather start with the right way and get it done the right way, then to have to do it the wrong way and then make all those adjustments. And sometimes those adjustments come with great pain and they have an impact on so many different people's lives. Hallelujah. Praise Jesus. Praise Jesus. Praise Jesus. Praise Jesus.

So, if I'm speaking by the desire of my gifting, the desire of my calling, it is the desire of God working in me as much as I give Him a place to work to speak to you and say, "Come on church people. Come on give your life to Him. Give your heart to Him. Give your destiny to Him. Give your callings and your plans and your purpose, give it to Him. Let Him really give your desire a turbocharge. Let Him give your desire and your passion- let Him influence you. Let Him help you because we need you and you need other people that have God in them. You need them to be Jesus to you because you can't get where you're supposed to go without them doing it."

And so, we're all busy chasing off on our desires, our own desires, natural men's desires and we don't have time for each other to help create Christ in you. With my desire, with my hope, with my faith, with my calling, with my gifting. And if I let that be something that's just driving me, then you know what happens is that we all begin to turbocharge our desire - the right desire. We begin to accelerate things. We begin to press for the maximum. We begin to go for the highest level attainable. We can't get to the highest level attainable just by using our own faith for our own stuff. We've got to have people doing it around us together, showing God off in each other so that we can see God in each other. See the Christ being formed and seeing our desires and our hopes and our dreams all happening. And it excites us and it accelerates us and it drives us to reach for more. Hallelujah. Praise Jesus. Praise Jesus.

Do you know how to accelerate a desire the quickest? I know how to help you today. Just if you can do this if you have the ability to do this, do this. *[Pastor John speaks in tongues.]* Speak in your heavenly language. *[Pastor John and the congregation speak in tongues.]* If you're not filled with the Holy Spirit yet, speak in your natural language and just say, "Lord, help me with my desire. Help me that whatever I'm lacking, You will bring it to me in my life." The Bible says, if you do this kind of thing, you come up like an edifice higher and higher in your most holy faith by speaking in the Spirit. *[Pastor John continues speaking in the Spirit.]* You begin to generate desire. *[Pastor John continues speaking in tongues]* "Lord, bless. Lord, help. Lord, work with me. Lord, give me. Lord, let me follow You. Lord, I give myself to You. Lord, here I am. Lord, I want to be You, to be the Lord of my life, not just the Saviour of my life, the Lord of my life. I want to be following everything You have for my life." *[Congregation and Pastor John speak in tongues.]*

Finally, I have to say this. Thank You, Holy Spirit, for reminding me. I was thinking about this yesterday. I was meditating on this, and this morning and I have a question to ask you because the desires of God are pushing me. I'm responding to Him and I have a question for you. If you have an opportunity to help one young person, one young person that they don't have to go through the world's rubbish and they can have the desire of God be the desire in them from a young age, what would

you do to help them? What would you do? How much of yourself are you prepared to give that young person to make it? Come on now. Would you give money? Would you give money? Yeah, I mean, that might sound like a hard thing.... but money is probably the easiest thing to give because it doesn't require anything else.

What about yourself? What about your time? What about some of your bad stories? You know that bad stories are as good as good stories if Jesus is in them. Come on. We all have stories where we messed up. That's why I don't hide that I was in such bad debt, I didn't know what to do with myself. I couldn't pay attention I was so bad. So, some people say, I am gonna hide all my faults. Sharon and I made a decision a long time ago, we're going to talk about the ways of God to you, the good and the bad because you learn as much in the bad that we do as much as the good that you hear.

Because if we make it out like we don't have any bad things in our lives, and then you have that impression and any bad thing that you have, then it becomes a *all fall down*, right? What would you do to help young people? I was talking to Mia yesterday, she was on ... riding bikes and was talking to her about her eight-year-old self that you all saw a video of, remember? "And you better buy this Kenneth Copeland Bible because it has everything you need in it," right? Come stand by me here Mia.

This is a young lady that has responded to the desires of God in her since then and she continues to respond. Now I ask you, what will you do to help her? She is not asking for help. *[People laugh.]* But I am just saying, if you had an inkling that the devil was actually trying to deviate her into the world system, and stop what God's desires are in her, what would you do to stop it? What would you do to help her, to make sure that she follows God's desires for her, rather than what the world says she can do? Because, she's smart, and also, she's an achiever. You know, one of the things *[Pastor John turns to Mia and asks her if he may share some things? Mia agrees.]*

One of the things that we talked about how God saved her life in MiXchange is that she was so driven to compete at the highest level and not fail that I know from when she was in high school, she'd come to me every Sunday at church and she used to tell me how many she got 93% for this, and 85% for this, "But I am not satisfied Pastor John – I'm not satisfied, I want more. I want more, I want more." Bigger, because she was driven to not fail. When God brought her to MiXchange, and she began to get the Word of God in her, she began to realise that, that natural desire was so strong in her, it was driving her whole life, and there was no room for her spirit man.

So, if she had to follow all the desires of her natural man, she would be lost in a system that would demand more of her. But God had a chance to change her and rescue her from a system that was going to tell her what's good and not good and how much she can excel at it and how much sweeties they're going to give her for doing that. God saved her. So, if you ask me, "What am I prepared to do? What am I prepared to do to save her future? Name it. I'm probably already doing it." Thank you. Hallelujah. Praise Jesus. Praise Jesus.

If you want to know, I have the same desire in my heart for all of you. That's why I do what I do. That's why Sharon and I live the way we live in front of you because we desire it so strong, that we will save you from yourself. Your same desires that you've created in yourself for so long that you don't know what God's desire is for you anymore because the world system tells you, have some more sweeties, have some more sweeties, have some more sweeties. It's all about the sweeties. It's all about the sweeties, and if you get enough sweeties, you'll be happy with all your sweeties. And you follow your whole life with sweeties, with milkshakes, and with sweeties, and sweeties, and milkshake, the world system way.

Rewards, rewards. Rewards will reward you for what you do in the world. Oh, what happened about without faith - it's impossible to please Him? You can only do that when His desire is filling you. Amen. I just want you to know I didn't plan any of this with Mia, this was all led by the Holy Spirit this morning. I didn't single out Mia for any other reason, I know her, I can talk to her because I'm also her Dad. Amen. Praise Jesus. Praise Jesus. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Jesus... Here's such a strong anointing here of His love, His care and His desires extended towards you. To draw you out of your desires of what you've created, such a thing for yourself. All these years I must follow my desire, must follow my desire, I must follow my desire. I've gotta follow my own plan, I've got to follow this thing that is my passion and my desire. I've got to follow it - meantime it's been the world, it's been telling you what that passion should be. The world has been telling you what that desire should be. For years and years and years it's been influencing you. Influencing you, telling you, all the sweeties are yours.

And Jesus is just saying, "I won't stop you. But I've got a much better standard for you. I won't stop you because I can't it is your choice to live how you want. But I keep putting My desire in you for My higher kind of life." Hallelujah. May it be so Lord. May it be so in Your people. That Your desire will become so strong in them that they will follow You with such strong desire, with such strong passion and intensity, that their whole lives will be overwhelmed by Your presence. Their whole lives will be consumed with being fulfilled by You. I promise you there is no greater life than that. There's no greater life than that. And any other thoughts that you have that life might be better, it is because the angel of light knows how to give you sweeties. Hallelujah.

Won't you all stand with me, please? Hallelujah. Well, hasn't God been good to me with my voice today? He got it out. Hallelujah. I think my voice has been getting stronger as I've preached. Hallelujah. Bill Horn phoned me last night. I was about to go to sleep and he called me. I said I didn't answer his phone call because I couldn't speak. So, I texted him and I said, "I can't speak." He says, "I need to talk to you, John. You don't have to speak. I'll speak." So, he video-called me, and he just started speaking the Word of God. Things that God is calling him, leading him. Things that are happening in his life and ministry, and how he's pursuing God and how God's changing his language.

So, he said, "So you can't talk." I said, "No." He says, "I'm gonna pray for you now. Put your hand on your throat." "I'm putting my hand on my throat." "I will pray for you that you'll be able to preach tomorrow." I said, "That is where my faith is at." He said, "I'm in agreement with you." So, my voice has got stronger and stronger as the

service has gone on. Glory to Jesus. Glory to Jesus. Hallelujah. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord.

Won't you put your hand on your heart and say, Lord, I desire to follow You. Where I've been following my own stuff and my own desires, I ask You to help me, that I will follow Your desires and that Your desires will get stronger in me. Those plans and purposes for my life, they will get stronger in me, those that You have for me, will guide me and lead me in Jesus' name. Hallelujah. I pray that you will be strengthened in your walk with God. I pray as I do every week with my faith attached to this prayer that no weapon formed against you prospers, that He gives His angels charge over you. Hallelujah. That you are surrounded by the Word and the blood of Jesus, that He protects you, you are blessed going out and blessed coming in. Hallelujah. I give you over to the protection of the Most High God and the angels that are sent to protect you, I give you over to their care for this next week in Jesus' name. Do you receive that? Say, amen.

I want to tell you that before we went to go and ride yesterday, on the bicycle, I was telling the cyclists who were riding, I said, you know, I was listening to Brother Jerry and I shared with them how Brother Jerry had an angel come and give him petrol and then he went and couldn't find his gas station then he realized it was an angel. I said to them before we cycled, I said, "I want you to know that every one of your angels are, they like it when we go riding bicycles because it gives them something to do." Because when we pray to protect us while we riding, you command him to do something. A lot of the time we don't give them any commands so they don't do anything. They just hang around having pizzas and milkshakes and getting fat, manna from heaven. You didn't get that, anyway. Pizzas and milkshakes are not manna from heaven. Anyway, praise the Lord.

Be aware your angels are with you. They are there, they are protecting you and I want to tell you something else they are there to help actually bring resources and provision to you, command them to go and get the resources and provision whatever you need. Go, come on, come on and tell them, "Lord, I speak resources and provision into my hand. I thank You that ministering spirits the servants are there to come and get them and bring them into my hands. Make it happen now. In Jesus' name. Get them to work, they're getting fat and lazy around you. Hallelujah. Amen. Okay, bye, everybody.