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Celebration and Relationships Part 10: Intentional Celebration of Design and Desire
Pastor John Bendixen (WTB)

Scripture reference: Romans 10:8-10 (NLT); Ecclesiastes 3:11 (AMPC); John 6:33 (AMPC), John 17:23-26 (AMPC); Proverbs 1:7 (AMPC, NKJV, TPT, MSG); Psalm 40:5-8 (AMPC)

Pastor Sharon:

Father, we thank You Father that we do not receive Your Word, this morning, as the word of a mere man as the Apostle Paul said, but we receive it as what it is. It's Your Word to us Lord and us who will believe it this morning and receive it, Lord, it will exercise its superhuman power with us, in us Father, that's what the Apostle Paul said Lord. For those who will adhere to the Word and believe it and receive it, it will exercise its superhuman power in those, in those and we are those Lord, who receive Your Word like this, this morning from Pastor John. Thank you, Pastor John, for being a spiritual leader that receives messages from God in Jesus' name and we all say, amen.

Pastor John:

Praise Jesus, glory to the Lord. Hallelujah, hallelujah, praise Jesus. Are you ready for the miracle this morning? Every time the Word of God is declared, it contains power to do a miracle in you. In fact, every change that happens in you, is because of the miracle of salvation. It's a miracle that you have the God-Spirit in your spirit. It's not something you could do, it's something only God can do. Put His Spirit in your spirit and make you alive. Therefore in your spirit you receive the Word of God because He lives in your spirit and He speaks His Word to your spirit that has Word capacity and it has a miracle of changing your whole world inside of you and the whole of you, hallelujah. That's a miracle. Every time the Word of God is preached it has the power to change, glory to God. You may be seated. Thank you, thank you,

Glory to Jesus. Well, we had a wonderful time yesterday, amen. Looks like every time we say we are going to have boerewors rolls, people show up. No, that just adds to the flavour of the whole event, right? Amen. I'm going to start right there, where the music and the *Sound and Song* was being sung. But before I do that, welcome Kate and Matthew and little Ethan to church for the first time this morning. It's good to have you back in service with us. Amen. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

So the Bible says in, I'm using the New Living Translation, in Matthew (Romans) 10 verse 8, the New Living Translation puts it this way, ⁸**In fact, it says, "The message is very close at hand; it is on your lips and in your heart."** The message it's very close at hand in your lips and in your heart. **And that message is the very message about faith that we preach:** that's the message we must preach that it's close at hand, it's in your heart, that's in your lips. This is one of the greatest salvation scriptures that there is. ⁹**If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.** Not you may be, you will be. ¹⁰**For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. (Romans 10:8-10 NLT).**

Now I need to, I need to pair that with a passage of scripture in Ecclesiastes chapter 3 verse 11, and it reads like this, this is the Amplified Bible. **11 He has made everything beautiful in its time. He also has planted eternity in men's hearts and minds**, so when you see men have an eternal inkling, God put it there man didn't put it there God put it there, **[a divinely implanted sense of a purpose working through the ages which nothing under the sun but God alone can satisfy** nothing under the sun can satisfy this, but God, but God, but God, **yet so that men cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.**

So, in other words God has put eternity in man's hearts and their minds but there is something that keeps them from just immediately being able to connect with God. What is it? I'm going to explain it and we're going to have a conversation a little bit like this. If you have God when you're born God places eternity in your heart. You are born with the desire to know Him. Every human being is born with the desire to know Him, every human being, it doesn't matter what colour, what creed, what culture. Every human being is born with eternity in their heart and their mind placed there by God. That's what the Word of God says. Okay? That cry for eternity this Scripture says can only be can only be satisfied by God, can only be satisfied by God. It says here, **11 ...[a divinely implanted sense of a purpose working through the ages which nothing under the sun but God alone can satisfy] (Ecclesiastes 3:11 AMP)**. Yeah. You can't satisfy this thing in your heart other than with God. Okay, so we can say that you are born with a desire, you're born with a desire to know God. So what happens while you're growing up and you're little and you have this desire to know God and then you get a little bit older and last week I showed you photographs of young children with different ages and they grow up and suddenly they start saying things like, "I don't know if there's a God. I don't know if God is real then why does He let this kind of thing happen in the world and why does this happen in the world and why does that happen." They start questioning all of these things and then they start getting thoughts that maybe there's a different kind of purpose.

Well you know what's happening? They're trying to fill this hole with questions but they have a struggle between the reality of what's happening in their life with the power of what's happening in their heart. So they are taught by society that the answer is in your intellect or philosophies. They get you to search out the philosophies of men with your intellect to answer the hole that God put in your heart.

How do you get saved then, how do you get born again? Well you are confronted with the message that saves you. The message that we've just read about in Romans right. The Good News of the Gospel that is preached you are confronted by that, it's preached to you. Somewhere you've heard about Jesus you hear about salvation and when you get confronted with that message you are immediately that desire is triggered. When you believe in your heart this is what fills your hole. God ignites your choice to pursue Him with faith. Your faith and your desire go together to confess out of your mouth. When your faith and your desire go together to confess out of your mouth you get saved. If you say something out of your mouth that you don't believe in your heart you're not saved, you've just said something. But you've got to believe in your heart that this desire that is inside of you, it's Jesus that's filling it. Then, when you make that decision; yes, this is what's filling me. Praise the Lord.

This is a wonderful thing. It's such a beautiful thing that unless you grow in God, you can't fully get to appreciate just what a wonderful that God has done for humanity to send Jesus to die for us, so that we can have this hole in our heart filled, that He put there in the beginning.

So, remember what I said before; desire without understanding of the origin creates a pathway to making every effort to make that desire to be filled. So, people pursue all kinds of things to have that desire filled, but it's not God. But, the desire without understanding that there's a Creator and that you're designed to connect with the Creator, unless you understand that you have all these pathways that are created in life for you to pursue many things to fill this desire.

So, we are created with desire to fulfill design. Come on. God designed you for Him to be in you. He designed you to live in you. But, because of man's sin, you couldn't have that desire fulfilled, so He sent Jesus to overcome the sin that was blocking you, so now, you just have to receive Him and He fills the desire. He is the fulfillment of all of our desire. Amen.

Now, you are designed by the Creator to fill you. So, when He fills you, you become the container of His purpose for you. He didn't just create you for nothing. He created you for a reason. So, all sin is a violation of design and purpose. If you want to know what the whole thing about sin is, is that sin keeps you from fulfilling your purpose and your design. That's what sin is. Because sin separates you from your Creator who designed you for a purpose. Amen.

So, if you get rid of the Designer, then you don't have to follow a single purpose. *Ja, nê*. And so then, if you do that, then you're no longer accountable to the Designer for your purpose. You cut accountability to Him out of your life. You become accountable just to you. I'm already preaching so good. Hallelujah.

I want to tell you about a friend that I grew up with, it's really where I learned to understand the Afrikaans culture. Even though my mom was Afrikaans and married an English man and he became my father, so my dad was English and my mother was Afrikaans and my grandmother lived with us in our house for many years and she was Afrikaans. Even though I learned to speak Afrikaans language in the house I didn't learn the Afrikaans culture until I became friends with an Afrikaans family and I learned about the Afrikaans culture because of the amount of time I spent with him, at his home, visiting him. This guy, he was so so talented, so talented.

I remember as a young boy, you know, being with him in primary school and high school; I mean that guy you know he didn't have to study anything, anything, he didn't study anything he never opened a book he never opened a book. I mean it. He didn't open a book and he just clocked straight A's. I don't know why he wanted to be friends with me but. He just clocked straight A's. More than that, I used to go and visit him in his house and his parents were quite wealthy they invested into, at that time of course I was just a little boy ten years old, eleven, twelve years old and at the time they invested in a lot of money into the most up-to-date sound systems that were *Hifis* that were available in that day. Big cases full of hifis speakers throughout the house and well I was already aware at that time that he had quite a good voice but I used to go and visit him sometimes and he would have, most of you won't even

know this name. It was when Pavarotti was still a young man but he used to sing with guys like Placido Domingo and those kind of guys and he used to be playing Placido Domingo in his house and Pavarotti and those kind of guys the South African version of them Ge Korsten and those guys, I'm ageing myself now, but he those guys made records those days; vinyls. He would be playing them in the house and I would come in and he would be singing with the voice that sounded like I mean it was like his voice was designed to be backing vocals for them. His voice was so good.

I remember when he went through puberty and his voice broke, they wanted him to go and be part of the Drakensberg Boys Choir. If you remember all those and they only used to pick the best to go there and they invited him and the parents said, no that's not for them, but he had a real quality voice. His voice broke and they were concerned that he was not going to anymore have the same quality of voice. Quite the opposite happened. In fact his voice became better and better and he began to get training to sing in operas and as he got older, later on in his teen years, he actually, I used to walk in again, I used to walk into their lounge and spending a weekend with them or whatever. You drift away from each other and you do different things in the house or the garden and I was friends with his brother, I had friends in the same area. I used to walk in the house and there he would have, in particular, I remember Plácido Domingo singing and he would be matching Plácido Domingo range for range, note for note, voice completely in sync with Plácido Domingo. Amazing talent. Talent.

I became aware that one of the mentors, one of the best artists, drawing artists, painters of our day. Maybe you guys, some people, would know if you know art you know there was a guy his name was Thinus de Jongh. Thinus de Jongh had a son called Gabriel de Jongh and they were famous for painting the mountains of the Cape and old dutch-style houses in the mountains and farm scenes and things like that. Same guy was so talented at painting that Gabriel de Jongh offered and, in fact he did it for about two years where Gabriel de Jongh mentored him in the art of coloring in painting because he was so talented at painting.

When he left school he went into medical school and he wanted to become a medical doctor; he failed three times, he had to alter degrees, he ended up taking ten years to get his medical degree that should have taken him six years and part of it was just because of the loose lifestyle that he was living and he wasn't really all that interested in that. He became a medical doctor. So, here is me living with him as my friend, all of this talent. He could, at any given time, just decide, "I'm gonna sing" and when he would sing in the house; no music no nothing. If he just would sang in the house, everybody would stop and listen because it was like living with Pavarotti. I tell you, not kidding you it was like that. If he just decided, "I've got a couple of free hours and I want to paint something," and have some spare canvas in the house and he would just go and he'd have a piece of canvas on an easel and he would go and mix some colors and he'd just start painting. He'd start drawing and painting and in about two or three hours there would be this magnificent start of a painting that was just amazing.

I want you to walk a journey with me; how would you advise that boy as a teenage boy, how would you advise him to live his life? With all that talent, intelligence,

creativity, a voice that would be world-class, how do you advise him to live his life? Bearing in mind he had a mother and father that was so strict on his lifestyle that of course they had a church component that was connected to raising him where he had to have short back and sides. He taught me manners that my parents didn't teach me. He taught me. Because I was in his household with his parents sitting, I remember I was about eleven years old and I'm sitting at the table and I got my hands on the table and he goes like this he says, "John." I said, "What now?" He says, "Don't do that." "Why not?" "Bad manners." "So what am I supposed to do?" "You never put your elbows on the table." My parents didn't teach me that, that family taught me that. I don't know why maybe it just didn't come up. Maybe they already told me that and I never listened, who knows. I listened that day.

I'm just trying to tell you that he had parents that had the money and they had the cultural sense to raise him the way culture said he should be raised. He lacked for nothing in his life, not input into his talent, not input into his financial input into whatever he wanted to do. How would you advise this young man to live his life? What would you say to him? What should he pursue in his life? He should go and study to become a specialist doctor because he certainly had the intelligence. The fact that it took him that long is just because he was jolling. Plain and simple. Experimented with drugs and alcohol because when he left home his parents had a tight rein on him and he rebelled against Christianity or religion let's put it that way, and ultimately he rebelled against God.

How would you advise this boy to live his life? He must pursue one of those talents. Yes, no? He must pursue which talent was he best at which one could make the most money, singing? Maybe it was art because nowadays you know art wow. Huh? Maybe he should have specialized and become a doctor because he had the brains for it. I mean I don't know what happened, maybe God just decided one day, "I've got all these extra talents that I've got to get rid of quickly and put in one body let me give it to this guy." Huh?

If God was the Originator and Designer of him and he gave him all those talents that meant he was supposed to do what with that talent? Satisfy his own desire? Satisfy his parents' desire for his life? What would you advise him to do? Wouldn't you rather say, "What is God in you?" See they made his life all about church and all about performance whereas God was after relationship. So wouldn't you want to teach him to have a relationship with Jesus? You can't tell me that his parents didn't teach him to be disciplined, because if there was one thing they were so strong on it was a disciplined life and disciplined relationships, but whenever you inject performance into that you never know the truth of what's in the relationship whether it's performance or just the joy of the relationship.

Come on. So, what he did was ultimately he looked at the church. He looked at the performance of life with God that he saw and he chose otherwise. He had one problem. He had one problem. Guess what that problem was? Anybody want to guess what that problem was? It's staring you right in the face. I was the problem, I was his problem. Do you know why I was his problem? Because for everything that he was doing, I was loving Jesus, I was serving Jesus in his face. The only thing that I could say that him and I were on equal standing was and I mean equal standing was sporting talent if you like. Some kind of sporting capability he was as good at

sport as anybody else he could have gone on and done whatever you want to do in sport. How does it happen that one guy got that much talent? Huh. He had it all literally. I mean he was good-looking to boot. It's not like God gave him all this talent and then the package was defective. The package was quite something and he knew it too.

So, one day, Sharon and I were married already and he arrived at our house in Boskruin. He arrived at our house and that's something I'll never forget because my dad was there, and he arrived at our house to come and visit us, with this what I understand later became his next wife. He came there and he was chain smoking the whole time he was there. It was like he was on edge and I remember him and I spoke to Sharon about that a few times already, when we remember things like that. He walked around in my house and he looked at my house and he looked at my sons and he was like questioning Sharon and I. He was questioning my dad and he was walking around and afterwards when he left I said, "Sharon what was that visit all about?" I couldn't understand why he came here? I mean besides that we've now been friends for twenty years. But he'd moved to Canada to do medical practice in Canada. Moved back from Canada because he racked up debt and went to Canada to go and make dollars there and use those dollars to pay off his debt. Then he came back to South Africa and started a practice in South Africa. I said, "What was that visit all about?" It's the last time I ever saw him. I don't know if he's alive or not. He just disappeared out of my life.

His younger brother had the same looks, had the same intelligence, had the same sporting ability. He didn't have the voice and he didn't have the art but he had a lot of stuff going for him. I found out many years later his brother from an early age, his brother said, "I don't believe in God. I don't believe in Jesus. I don't believe in that stuff." Many years later I found out that he'd washed out through a rehab center in his fifties from heroin and cocaine and he had nothing going for him in his life. He was living, in a bad place. They both had eternity in their hearts. They both knew that only God could fill that space. They both had all the talent in the world to do whatever they wanted to do and both of them abused it. Both of them misused it.

So, I don't know what happened to the older brother, I don't know. A long time ago we made contact with his mom. So, those years things happened in his mom's life and so she ended up marrying what was his father. So she had two sons from a previous marriage. Those details are irrelevant for this conversation. So, he had two half brothers that were much older than him, like ten, fifteen years older than him. So, those brothers tried to make contact with me many years later, because they loved me. They saw the influence that I had on their young brother's life. Hello?

God is the only one that can fulfill the hole that is in your heart. It is not the achievement of your talent. It is not the achievement of your self-imposed goals or results. It's just God. It's only Jesus. It's only Jesus that can fill that hole. It's only Jesus that can fill that hole. It's only Him. I am not ashamed. This man standing in front of you today is not ashamed of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. I'm not ashamed to say Jesus is my Savior, He's my Lord, He's my Lord and I owe Him everything. I mean my life is a testament to His Word living in my spirit and His Word becoming so full in my heart that I believe it and because I believe in Him and

believe His Word, I live with Him. When I live with Him, He has made my life significant. Hallelujah.

So, if you had to give me a choice and you had to say, "John choose talent or choose Jesus." What do you think I would choose? So, now what happens if you've got talent and you've got Jesus. Hello? If you've got talent and you've got Jesus, what do you choose? Why don't you choose your talent? Obviously you got something that other people in the world don't have or maybe you've got more of it than other people have. So, why don't you choose your talent? Because your talent will fail you. In a system of performance your talent will fail you. Might not fail you now, but there will come a time when it will fail. Yeah.

So, John 6 verse 44 says, ⁴⁴ **No one is able to come to Me Jesus unless the Father Who sent Me attracts and draws him and gives him the desire to come to Me, and [then] I will raise him up [from the dead] at the last day (John 6:33 AMPC).** That desire is placed in you by God. And John chapter 17 verse 23 says ²³ **I in them and You in Me, in order that they may become one and perfectly united, that the world may know and [definitely] recognize that You sent Me and that You have loved them [even] as You have loved Me.** ²⁴ **Father, I desire, this is Jesus praying, that they also whom You have entrusted to Me [as Your gift to Me].** Hello? What are we? What are we, to Jesus? We are a gift from the Father to Jesus. Do you think a gift can do whatever they want to in life or do you think a gift is at the call of the Creator? **You have entrusted to Me [as Your gift to Me] may be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory, which You have given Me [Your love gift to Me]; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.**

If you ever wanted to know, that's how God loves you before the foundation of the world because you were already in Christ before the foundation of the world. That's why no one can tell me that anybody born on the earth is born by accident. Everybody born on the earth is born by the design of the Creator. ²⁵ **O just and righteous Father, although the world has not known You and has failed to recognize You and has never acknowledged You, I have known You [continually]; and these men understand and know that You have sent Me.** We live in a world that doesn't want to acknowledge God. They don't want to. Why? Because they want to serve their self-interest. ²⁵ **I have known You [continually]; and these men understand and know that You have sent Me.** ²⁶ **I have made Your Name known to them and revealed Your character and Your very Self, and I will continue to make [You] known, that the love which You have bestowed upon Me may be in them [felt in their hearts] and that I [Myself] may be in them (John 17:23-26 AMPC).**

So this is a heart thing. Okay, I want to read to you from Proverbs chapter 1 verse 7. I'm going to read it to you in a couple of translations. I'm starting with the Amplified. ⁷ **The reverent and worshipful fear of the Lord is the beginning.** What is the beginning? The reverent and worshipful fear of the Lord. That's the beginning of everything. **And the principal and choice part of knowledge [its starting point and its essence];** everything is about the fear of the Lord, **but fools despise skillful and godly Wisdom, instruction, and discipline (Proverbs 1:7 AMPC).**

Hello? I'll tell you what, people in the world pride themselves on how well they can achieve through discipline and through hard work but they are fools because they're only taking the knowledge that is worldly. They refuse to take that same discipline and apply it to an intimate relationship with Jesus. Yeah. The New King James Version says, ⁷ **The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction (Proverbs 1:7 NKJV)**. The Passion Translation says it this way, ⁷ **How then does a man gain the essence of wisdom? We cross the threshold of true knowledge when we live in obedient devotion to God.** Obedient devotion, that's desire. **Stubborn know-it-alls will never stop to do this, for they scorn true wisdom and knowledge (Proverbs 1:7 TPT)**. The Message Translation says, ⁷ **Start with God. The first step in learning is bowing down to God; only fools thumb their noses at such wisdom and learning (Proverbs 1:7 MSG)**. Hallelujah.

I'm going to ask you to enter into a little bit of an exercise with me, today. Are you ready for this? Okay. I'm going to ask you for a moment to go on a journey with me, as a disciple, not as a pastor. So just look at me as a man, as a disciple, and I'm asking you to give me advice on how I should live my life. So, I know you can't separate what I'm doing from the man, but if you just had to say, "I'm not advising you on how to run the church or how to lead people. I'm not advising you on that, I'm just going to advise you as a person. I'm going to advise you on how to live your life." Become my counselors, tell me how I should live my life, what do you think I should do in my life? What do you think my focus should be? Where should I put my highest priorities in my life? Advise me, tell me, just as a disciple, not as a pastor, just as a disciple. What do you advise me? You and I, sitting around coffee and I'm saying to you, "You know what, hey? I've really had a wonderful life, but I feel like there's something more I've got to press for, there's something more that I need in my life. Advise me, what should I do?" Seek God. Wouldn't you say that? Seek God.

So if I had to say to you then, "Okay," and let's just assume I'm a stubborn know-it-all, okay? "So how do I seek God? Come on, you tell me I must seek God. I'll take it at face value, I must do that. How do I do that? Remember, I'm a busy man. From morning until night I'm a busy man, I'm busy with my life, I've got stuff to do, I've got life to live, I've got money to make, I've got a career to develop. So, tell me how I should live my life and seek God. I need to find a church? Is that what you're telling me? That's the answer?" Find a church. Okay, is that it? I must just find a church, I've got to get in His Word. Okay, I've got to find a church, got to get in His Word, anything else? Connection with God personally, take responsibility for a personal thing? "Okay, you guys, I'm going to do that for half an hour every morning, and I've done what you've said. Cause I'm busy, I'm busy."

Tell me now, come on, am I doing right now or not? No? Listen, you told me I must give God first, I'm doing it first thing in the morning. First thing in the morning, that's what I do every morning. Cause you told me that, I go to church now every Sunday, and I give my tithes and you know what, you didn't even tell me that, I go to prayer meetings. So now, I'm set, I'm set. No, I've not done enough yet? What must I do next? What else must I do? I must seek God's will in everything? How do I do that? I plant the Word? How do I do that? I've got to speak the Word, how much? I've got stuff to do, how much? All the time? All the time? I've got to speak the Word all the time? You guys don't know what real life is all about, I can't do that stuff. I've got

studies to do, I've got work to do, I've got telephone calls to make, I've got business to go and do.

Come on, how do I do this thing? I've got to get my priorities straight? I've got to put God first? How do I do that? You've got nothing more to say? I've got to choose, I've got to choose, I've got to choose that. So if it's really in my heart and I believe this, then it's not a half an hour in the morning that does this. This is something I must keep in my mind and in my mouth all day long, then I'm seeking Him.

So, are you telling me if I don't do that but I give half an hour and prayer and church, are you telling me that I'm not really seeking God first? What? I refuse to believe you, you guys are putting me down, I'm a top-performing person and I know how to perform as a Christian and if you tell me what I've got to do then I will do that and I will have success. Tell me I won't, I won't? *Nou hoe nou?* Why not? Because I need a relationship, not a set of rules. Why didn't you tell me that in the beginning? It must be from the heart, it must be a choice. It must be something I want to do. I want to live in Him. It's not a set of rules. How do you teach me to live by those choices and not by a set of rules? How do you teach me? I'm going to watch you. You're going to show me now. You, you're going to show me. Because what you tell me to do, I can do that. *Dis maklik.* I'm a good, disciplined person. I can do that. But now you're going to show me. You all are going to show me. You're going to show me how to do this.

What am I going to see when I look at you? Am I going to see you walking around speaking mumblings under your breath? Huh? Am I going to see you putting God first the way you're telling me to do it? Oh, good for you. I'm watching. Because you see, what we are saying about God and what we are doing about God, is two different things. But when we live like God then people say, "That's the God I want, because I see you doing it."

Let me tell you, my sons, when they grew up, they didn't hear me telling love to my wife. They saw me loving my wife. They watched me do it every day - and they knew that it was possible for them to do it, because I did it. You know, what I've said, hey? All this time... What does it take to make a good marriage? One day at a time. So, what does it take to destroy marriage? One day at a time.

It's the same with a walk with God. It's not what you say, it's what you do. Right? Okay, come now you're going to continue to be my advisors for a few more minutes. Now I'm going to ask you to tell me what to do as a pastor. You are all my partners. Now you're going to instruct me what kind of pastor you want me to be. Tell me now, what kind of pastor you want me to be? You want me to be spiritual and a spiritual example? Thank you very much Le Roux. Am I not that already? (*Le Roux: Yes, you are...*) Thank you Le Roux. So, but what does it look like to you - for me to be a spiritual example to you? What does it look like? (*Pastor Sharon: You hear God.*) I'm following God's plan. (*Pastor Lynn: Someone who has integrated his whole life with the ways of God.*) Thank you Pastor Lynn. Someone who's integrated my own ways with God's ways - and it should be obvious to all of you by now, if you've been around me for a while, that actually I'm not trying to pursue my own plans and I'm always seeking what God's plans are next. Is that what you want? Is that what you would counsel me? I'm living that. You observe that in me? Hallelujah.

So then, I can with confidence say that if you catch me on a bike... and after hundred kilometers and I'm sweaty and dirty and I can have the opportunity to be ugly. Ask Grobbie's he knows. The sum total of my ugliness was when he was riding, after hundred and forty kilometers, in thirty five degree heat, next to me on a bicycle and he said, "*Dis mos 'n maklike sport.*" (This is an easy sport). I told him, "Shut up, Grobbie's."

Simon and Tarryn cycled from Joburg to Cape Town with me, two hundred kilometers a day. Let me tell you, you get to see if the Word of God is really living in a person's heart when you're putting your body under that kind of pressure. You've got to have a strong spirit man that will be telling you how to behave when your body's weak. It comes to little things when you guys are around me and Pastor Sharon, what you see us living in front of you is the way we live at home. There's no difference to what we do at home to what you see me. I mean I have more intimacy with her at home - that gets even better - but I don't hide anything from you. If I want to hug her, kiss her and I want to tell her publicly I think she's gorgeous and amazing, I do that all the time. I love to walk in the shopping malls holding her hand and putting my arm around her and having a wonderful fellowship relationship with her because that's what she likes to do. Thank you, my love, I've always been kind to you. For forty-five years, I've been kind to you. Only always calm. I obeyed the Word of God first in our marriage when the Word of God said to me I must love her as Christ loves the church and give myself up for her. You still eat of that fruit today. Is that what you want from a pastor? I want him to be a living example to you. The Word of God, same at home as he is in the pulpit. Thank you, Pastor Lynn.

So now let me just switch this up for a minute. Come on, guys, let's grow this church. Let's grow this church. Come on, we got numbers. We need numbers here. We got to grow this church. Let's get more people, more people. Come on, we need a bigger church. We need, we want to put more screens. We got more churches to plant. We got to do more stuff. Come on, we got to build this thing. We got stuff to do. We got a world to reach. We got people... Come on, let's grow this thing. We've got to grow by hundred people next month because otherwise we're not making a difference in our society. We got to be the salt and the light otherwise we're not making anything happen.

I wonder if that was Jesus's approach? I wonder if the Apostle Paul lived that way? I wonder if he was whipping up Silas and Timothy and Titus and Luke who was with him and said, "Come we got to grow the church. We got to get numbers here, boy." Or I wonder if they were just authentically living in Jesus and wherever they went they just took Jesus with them and when Jesus manifested Himself through them because they were living with Him, He showed up everywhere. So, then Jesus became irresistible through Apostle Paul and he, him good self says, "I glorify my Father and the world knows me because they are me and you gave them to me as a gift and so now the gift I trust will be like my glory and see my glory." See when you live for Jesus you have a desire to be like Him. When you're living by a set of rules you don't know exactly what you desire but you have to focus on results because you don't have anything else.

Come on, we can't afford to marginalize Jesus to a time slot. We can't afford to put Jesus into just a little space in our day and say we are being Christians. God has made our desire so strong to be filled completely by Him, let that desire grow. Let it flow, let it burst out of your spirit man and let it drive your entire future. He has given you that desire in your recreated spirit man.

So, I go back to my friend who walked out of my life and he always told me that, he always told me that. He said, I challenge him because of the way that in my simplicity of the way I live my life for Jesus. Because he brought all of his intellectual processes to my world and every time he brought it to my world I brought Jesus to him. He would come to me with all these philosophical arguments and these ideologies of what he wants to accomplish in his life and all I would say is, "I'm following Jesus, I'm following Jesus, I'm following Jesus." He said, "You're too simplistic in everything you got to bring more, more game to this equation." I said, "What more is there than to believe Jesus?"

I was fourteen years old when we had a life-changing conversation sitting on the pavement outside his home about this very matter. We had a life-changing conversation about, "I'm gonna follow Jesus." He said, "I've got more things to do in my life than just follow Jesus." That became a defining moment and he followed all of the more things that he had to accomplish than follow Jesus, he followed that into wherever he is now in his life. He couldn't stand around me, he couldn't stay around me because my life is Jesus. It still is. I was his conscience. I was the voice in his head all the time, all the time all the time. I pray that I still am, if he's still alive somewhere I pray that I still am.

Psalm chapter 40 verse 5 says, ⁵ **Many, O Lord my God, are the wonderful works which You have done, and Your thoughts toward us; no one can compare with You! If I should declare and speak of them, they are too many to be numbered.** ⁶ **Sacrifice and offering You do not desire, come on. Sacrifice and offering, You do not desire. Nor have You delight in them; You have given me the capacity to hear and obey (Psalm 40:5-6 AMPC).** Come on, all of you young people sitting everywhere in the organisation - anybody that's under sixty is young. This should be liberating to you because you don't have to say, "Sacrifice is the way I have to live my life to make a difference." You just have to say, "You have given me the capacity to hear and obey and so therefore I follow what I hear and obey. This should be liberating to your future because you know that God will give you all the resources you need to accomplish what He designed you to be. No matter where you are in your life stage - I should have said eighty and below.

⁷ **Then said I, Behold, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me;** ⁸ **I delight - to do Your will, O my God; yes, Your law is within my heart (Psalm 40:7-8 AMPC).** His Word is in my heart and so that's why I say to you, I've said this to you many times; I can't be a pastor to you if I'm not a disciple first. People want to say, "What is the highest office you can have in the church? Is it an apostle? Is it an evangelist? Is it a pastor? Is it a teacher?" No, it's none of those things. It's a disciple. A disciple is the highest office you can have in the church because you can't become anything else until you're a disciple. I want to just make this clear one more time - I do this quite regularly - I want to make this one time. I don't want you to be a

disciple of John and Sharon. I want you to be a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. But I can say like the Apostle Paul, "Follow me as I follow Christ." Amen.

I'm not bringing to you philosophies of men. I'm not bringing you leadership, the first top ten leadership laws that you must follow to be a success or the top twenty success rules that can make you something special. I'm not bringing you that. I'm bringing you the Word of God and I'm saying, "You have to follow Jesus. You've got to become a disciple of the Lord Jesus but where you see Jesus in me follow Him." The same applies to all of you in this auditorium. Where you see Jesus in someone else, follow that. When you see someone being kind you say, "I see Jesus in that." When you see someone talking and being generous you say, "I see Jesus in that." When you see somebody serving somebody else, "I see Jesus in that. I can follow that." I don't demean that. I exalt that.

The world is completely the other way around. If I serve you I'm making myself subservient to you. No, I'm not subservient and neither are you subservient to me or to the church. We serve each other. That's very different to being a subservient. So, the devil wants to blur the lines the whole time saying, "Serving is being subservient." In other words you have no honor and dignity if you serve. Your dignity and your honor is compromised when you serve. God says, "You can't actually be promoted until you serve." You can't have any status in the church and in the Kingdom of God, you have nothing until you serve the church. Come on, there's this misconception that unless you're preaching the Gospel to the world you are not doing the right thing. My whole life is the living Gospel.

I don't, I mean I do want to go and tell people when I have opportunity and sometimes make opportunity to tell people about Jesus but I don't put my whole life into a few times that I share Jesus with someone. Come on, we all know better than that. I mean, we go to a restaurant and we order a meal the way we conduct ourselves at the table with the person who serves us tells a story. Just the conversation you're having at the table tells a story. If your words are not telling a story to the person that's serving at the table, you've already missed the plot because you're so about yourself that you have no interest in him being part of that conversation. Then you leave them a bigger tip than the bill was. Then you'll see what their response is to you. Thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you.

Jesus loves you. I'm now a planter of the Gospel. I've not only spoken words to them, I've also demonstrated life to them. Ah, but we got to get caught up in this thing and let me tell you, I wrestle with the same thing as you do all the time, value. If my tip is more than twenty percent, I'm tipping too much. Because who gives twenty percent away? Money. You see it's because you're seeing it as a cost not a seed and so to you the cost of tipping is a big deal. How much do I give the guy who just served me for twenty minutes? But if you connect that to my life conversation that I've been having around him while he's been serving me and now I give him and then I can bless him with words and he's ready to hear my words because I have blessed him. I've meaningfully touched his life. Now my life is not a value-based exercise, it's an eternity-based exercise.

You see, if you see it as a value cost thing then it's about- it's my money, I earned it and I deserve to say how I use it and he's not worthy or she's not worthy of what I'm

giving. Twenty minutes, twenty rand max. You think that's the way, you think that's the way Jesus treats you? Okay, let's make it like that. You give Me twenty minutes in the morning, I'll give you twenty minutes worth of My life for the rest of your life. You want to be performance orientated like that and value driven, let's make a deal. For every minute you give Jesus, He is going to give you that in eternity back and design revelation and purpose revelation and revelation for freedom. When you need it most, He is only going to give you twenty minutes worth.

How much money do you want to give away now to someone who's serving you? Remember, Jesus said it. You see people have got just one little track that they want to say that's what Christians should be, but Jesus said, "Ah, you know what, I know that you love Me because you came to visit Me in jail and you gave Me water when I needed it and you clothed Me when I did." "When did we visit You in jail?" "When you gave it to someone that was the least of all of you. When you gave it to that one you gave it to Me."

Oh, I don't want to give someone that puts in petrol. How much does your juice cost in your tank nowadays? A thousand bucks? And you give the guy five rand for serving you. That's enough. Well he's paid to do this job and stand there in the cold and the wind and the heat and everything else, so five rand is enough to juice my car. You know what that shows me? It shows me that your walk with Jesus is measured, it's measured the same way. Let me tell you, I have to struggle with these things too because I'm preaching to myself too. It's not something I fixed today in front of this pulpit, I have to fix it when I'm at that garage and I now have got to give a tip. That's when I fix it, not here. It's easy to say, "Hey, I'm hearing Pastor John, I think I can change this." Until you've got to give the next tip, that's where you fix it and every time you've got to make the same decision. I made a decision you know, I did. I made this decision when I, when the price of fuel started going up and I started putting two thousand rand worth or more worth of fuel in my car and I saw these guys, they'd come to me and they say, "Eish, this one tank of fuel is more than I earn in a month." Now, I must give him ten rand, because petrol is now so pricey, I can fill my whole tank and it's so pricey, I don't know if I can fill it again, so I'm only going to give him ten rand because I don't have enough left.

So, I made a decision. This had nothing to do with Sharon, I've shared it with her, but it is all my decision. Every time I fill up a tank, it's a minimum of a hundred rand goes to them. "But Pastor John, yees, all that money." What? If I'm giving to the poor, I'm giving to the Lord. I'm loaning to the Lord. That loan is not like the same, one for one. Who knows what He's going to pay me back, and how He's going to pay me back when I'm giving like that? See I'm talking about desire. See, we want to put desire on a high platform of you know, purpose and all of that and then when you start breaking down how you live your life, and you start to say, "Do I see Jesus in you like this? Do I see Jesus then? Do I see Jesus there? Do I see Jesus in kindness to your husband? To your wife? Do I see kindness in this? Do I see? Where do I see?"

But we want to have these lofty ideologies, how we must brand ourselves in the world. Meantime Jesus has put a desire in us saying, "Come, come, come spend time with Me, let Me put Myself in you. Let Me put Myself in you because the more of Myself that I'm in you, the more responsive you're going to be. All the time you're going to just be responsive to My desire". Hello? Shush. *(Pastor John switching off*

his alarm clock.) Do you know that I believe that that's the best way to live? If you've got all of Jesus in you and His desire is filling you so much that you're responsive to Him all the time, all the time, then you are in a place where you can say, "I'm following Him, I'm fine."

What kind of thing do you think Jesus, what kind of thing, kind of life do you think Jesus is going to give you? Now, I've asked you to advise me today. Yeah? Now I'm doing some advising of my own and here's what I want to say to you, if you have the desire of Jesus in your heart where you can say like the Psalmist, "I delight to do Your will, oh Lord." I am not so interested in sacrifice and obedience because I know that it doesn't touch You at all, but to hear and obey, [Pastor John clicks his fingers], that is what You are after. Now I am going to fill my life with Your Words that I hear and Your words are going to fill me, fill me, because after all Your Spirit is in my spirit and it is a miracle creation that Your Spirit is in my spirit and Your Spirit can grow in my spirit. Your life can grow in me. As it grows, my desire gets overwhelmed by Your desires in me. So, my natural desires get weaker and weaker and my spiritual desires get stronger and stronger and it will lead me, and it will guide me and You will cause me to lie down by still waters and eat green pastures. There will be times in my life when I will walk through the valleys of shadows of death but I will see no evil. Because You, Your rod and Your staff, You will look after me and take care of me and comfort me. At the end of that process, at every stage of my life, You will prepare a table before me in the presence of all those who tried to keep me down and hold me back, and say, "It can't work." This beautiful table and all Your gifts and all Your blessings and all Your wonders will be evidence to them. It will be a witness to them of who You are in my spirit, in my life, how You consume me. Hallelujah, hallelujah.

Isn't that how you want to live your life as a Christian? Doesn't your spirit man call to that kind of life? Doesn't it just say, "Come on, give me more of Jesus? Let His Word be alive and powerful in me. When you talk to me, I want to talk Jesus to you." Then you can't help yourself, you want to say, "You know what, I got a whole bunch of community, a whole people that feel the same way as me." "Really?" "Yes. Come meet them." "When?" "Sunday Morning, 9:30." "But if that doesn't help you, we will make it a coffee. I will bring a whole bunch of my friends. We can sit around the table and you can talk to them because we all talk the same language. We all love Jesus more than anything." That is salt and light. Hallelujah. Praise Jesus.

It has been you know, your desire. Then He comes along and He says to you as He has to me on many of times in my life. He says to me, you know, Brother Jerry calls himself God's favourite? Well, you know, I reckon, I will give him that. But I know that he also says, "Because I am, you are too." But I feel like I am God's favourite. Because every now and again God will say, have conversations with me. He will say, "John, I want to do something for you." Or, "John it is time for you to put your faith out because I want something to come to you. I need you to believe that I am telling you this. I want you to speak it out, so I can bring it to you. Because if you don't speak it, I can't bring it. So, I am putting it in your heart to believe it, so you can speak it, so I can bring it to you. I can get the angels busy to bring it." "Yes, Lord."

So then I don't have to pursue cars. I don't have to pursue things. God puts them in my heart in a time and then I speak it out and then they come to me. Because He wants me to have them. Let me tell you, God can do miracles for you that you can't

comprehend. All we got to do is not have a mindset that we got to do it the way the world says we have to do it. Hallelujah. God will break that mold all the time. Won't you stand with me, please? Praise Jesus. Praise Jesus. You all are going to have a wonderful, wonderful surprise next Sunday morning. Hallelujah. I'm not telling you about it, you will have to show up and come and see. Hallelujah. Praise the Lord. Amen. Praise Jesus, praise Jesus.

Won't you put your hand on your heart? Just say this with me, say, "Jesus, thank You that You live in my heart. You are my Lord and Saviour. I believe in You. You fill me with all of Your life. I receive all Your desires for me and I believe in You and I trust You, that You make them all come to pass in Jesus' name. Thank You, Lord, that You give me the strength to follow through with everything that You put in my heart, in Jesus' name. Hallelujah. Do you believe that? Do you believe Jesus is your Lord? [Congregation: Yes] Yes, amen, I do. Hallelujah.

You know, believing is not a thing that happens one time, it is a thing that happens all the time. You got to believe everything, every word that I speak, that it is not in the presence of someone, or targeted to someone. Every word that I speak, is in the presence of someone, and it is targeted to someone. It just happens to be the most High God, who is not with me in the room, I mean, that I can see. He is living inside of me, and then He is also in the room. "Oh." It is a no-loose situation here. Praise the Lord. Praise Jesus, praise Jesus. Praise Jesus. Hallelujah, hallelujah. Hallelujah.

Well, I believe God is doing amazing things, because we are living in the time of maximum. I thank you for coming yesterday, those of you who were here yesterday, to just be a witness as to what God has already done and He has got much much more for us. Because He has placed desires in us that He is asking us that we speak words that He can bring them to us. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

I pray for you right now that God's supernatural power lives inside of you to have every physical disability overcome by the life of His Word, right now. Healing power, restoring health power, comes into your body right now in the name of Jesus, right now, in the name of Jesus. His supernatural ability, His life force comes into you and restores everything that has been broken because of whatever decisions. Right now life is restored back to your physical body. I pray that that same life floods into your relationships wherever they might be broken or dismantled and I pray that in Jesus' name, they will be restored and recovered. Hallelujah. Above all, Jesus will be part of every relationship. Above all, Jesus will be part of every relationship because in that is the restoration.

I pray that wherever there has been a financial deficit and an implosion, or some kind of thing that has happened to you financially, I pray that the life force of Jesus floods you, and your desire, and your mouth, and your mind, and He begins to bring things into your world to undo all of that devastation and brings restoration to you in Jesus' name. I declare that you are blessed going out, and you are blessed coming in. I declare that He gives His angels charge over all that you have need of, protection and everything else in your life. Hallelujah. Yes. I pray that you will, you will achieve the things that God birthed you to achieve, that He designed you a purpose He built you for, you will do that. You will begin that journey right now in Jesus' name, right now in Jesus' name and you all say, amen.

I love you all dearly. I love you all dearly. I love you enough to live for Jesus. Amen.
Amen. Okay bye everybody.