

24 December 2023

Crossover Part 18: It's the Season and it's Crossover Time

Pastor John Bendixen (WTB)

Scripture reference: 1 John 1:1-5 (TPT); 1 John 1:4 (MSG); Luke 2:25-52 (NLT); Luke 2:38 (NKJV)

Pastor Sharon Bendixen:

Glory, glory, Father. We praise You. Thank You, Lord. Father, thank You for Your Word that comes to us now. Thank You for Your spirit that is within and upon Pastor John and we continue to always declare, Father, that he says what he hears You saying this morning. He speaks by the Spirit of God to us and our hearts receive, and our hearts believe, and our hearts weave. Our hearts receive, our hearts believe, and our hearts weave, and our hearts just love what's coming now, this message like rain falling on our hearts, like rain falling on our hearts. You bless Pastor John this morning, and You bless us in Jesus' name. And we all say, Amen.

Pastor John Bendixen:

Thank you. Wow, awesome sound and song this morning. Praise the Lord Thank you, thank you. Praise Jesus. Well, look at all of you who stayed behind and didn't go to some kind of desert location. You know what a desert location is? It's that sand that's on the side of the sea nothing grows there, It's desert by the sea. Hallelujah. It's all a matter of perspective, hey? Ja. Well, I'm glad you're at church this morning. Just agree with me that those of you who are here, those of you that are watching online, that this will be a moment where God will minister to you and bless you and encourage you. Do you agree? *[Congregation answers, yes]* Amen. Please be seated.

Well, happy Christmas, happy New Year, happy life, happy everything. Now I've covered the whole lot. Well, I'd rather say blessed. Be blessed. Amen. This coming Wednesday night, Thursday night, and Friday night, as we did last week, Thursday and Friday, the church will be open at five o'clock. We'll just flow with the Holy Spirit and see what He wants to do. We have had some marvellous times together. As it turned out, we haven't gone the full hour. Normally we've gone about 40, 45, 50 minutes. But we just flow with the way the Lord wants us to go. Amen. So, for those that have been coming, thank you. For those that are yet to come, please feel welcome. Amen. Amen.

Hey, just because it's Christmas and so many people are gone, doesn't mean to say you can be all quiet and stiff and formal with me. Huh? You've got to say; Amen. Hello, Pastor John. How are you, Pastor John? Thank you, Pastor Christi. I'm doing good, thank you so much, Pastor Christi. Hallelujah.

The title of my message this morning; *It's the season, and it's crossover time*. It is the season. It's the season where people allocate time to celebrate many things. But for us, we are celebrating crossover. So, it is the season of many things, and it's a season and a reason to celebrate. But it's also our crossover time. Crossover doesn't have to be hard. Crossover just needs to be obedient. Amen. It only gets hard when you're disobedient, and then you fight with yourself. You have war within yourself because you're disobedient. Obedient people don't have war like that. They know what they've got to do, and then they just have to deal with themselves that's got to make them do what they do. The people that are disobedient get confused with themselves. They do, because their spirit man's telling them one thing, but their lifestyle tells them another thing.

Anyway, the Lord has really been blessing me in my crossover time with revelations of Himself, with times of refreshing for me. And it is my purpose that as I transform and grow in other areas of my life, so I will grow more and transform as a spiritual being. Amen.

In this book, this crossover booklet that you have, on page 9, if you remember, there was a moment when I brought binoculars with me to church, and I told you what the different binoculars would do. I brought a pair of expensive binoculars, and then someone came to me after the church service, and I guessed at what the price of the binoculars were, and someone came to me after church, and they showed me the binoculars. You could buy it on Takealot, I believe it was, and I think the price was R50,000 or R55,000. So needless to say, I'm very glad I have those binoculars tucked away in my safe. And it's not for loan or for rental, for those who might be thinking such a thing. It's just a nasty thought that you would even consider coming to me with such a request.

So at the time, this is how Pastor Sharon put it together. *The Lord wants me to see the vision of my future through His lenses. The enemy wants to bring the vision of my future to very right now. In other words, internal right now things. Face this problem, it's so big in your life. Face this problem now. The minute he can get me to do that, to think only about this problem, I can't see with vision. I can't see through the lenses of the Word of God as to what good things God's got for me, because I can only deal with this problem in front of me now. It shouts so loud sometimes. Seeing what God wants, making sure it stays in focus. That it stays near to me. That it stays in my scope of vision all the time because if I lose track of that vision, then all manner of other things come into my eyesight. It is so intended to distract me all the time. It's so important for me to have the eyeglasses of God front and centre of my eyesight world.*

It just is a thing that you can have many different kinds of eyesight. And it is my declaration that I have the eyesight of the Holy Spirit. I have the eyesight of the Word of God. And I have the eyesight of His vision, His plan and His purpose for me. I have that eyesight. If I make that declaration and I confess that over my life, then I have got a much better chance of actually getting there. Right? Yes. So praise the Lord.

If you are always focused on the pressure points of everything that's getting to you right now, it's almost always going to be something that is going to slow you down or have you bump into something that is going to cause you to stumble. Amen.

When we were here together on Thursday and Friday afternoon, I was reading this passage of Scripture to you from 1 John chapter 1:1-5, those people that were here in The Passion Translation. The Apostle John writes this, **¹ We saw him with our very own eyes. We gazed upon him and heard him speak. Our hands actually touched him, the one who was from the beginning, the Living Expression of God. ² This Life-Giver was made visible and we have seen him. We testify to this truth: the eternal Life-Giver lived face-to-face with the Father and has now dawned upon us. ³ So we proclaim to you what we have seen and heard about this Life-Giver so that we may share and enjoy this life together. For truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus, the Anointed One. ⁴We are writing these things to you because we want to release to you our fullness of joy. ⁵ This is the life-giving message we heard him share and it's still ringing in our ears. We now repeat his words to you: God is pure light. You will never find even a trace of darkness in him (1 John 1:1-5 TPT).**

I was sharing with the people here on Thursday and Friday how amazing it must have been. And if you were the Apostle John, you are one of those very rare human individuals that lived in the same time slot as Jesus in His flesh. He writes here and he says that One that was in the beginning, that One that was the source of everything, that One came to earth and we saw Him and we touched Him and we heard Him. And now we are a witness to the things which we touched and we saw and we heard. That Life Giver, that One from the beginning that came to be with us, we are a witness to Him. What an amazing privilege to be the Apostle John. As I said on Thursday and Friday, what an amazing thing that in the book

of John he writes about himself as the one that Jesus loved. He was the one that would take his head and put it on Jesus' chest. There was a level of affection, there was a level of joy between them that other disciples didn't have. Hallelujah.

You know, that speaks to me a lot because I'm quite an affectionate person just in general. In general, I don't mind people coming into my space and I like to be someone that reveals that side of Jesus. That He's always wanting to come into your space and be a real touch to you. He does. When my sons were growing up and my boys when they were little, you know, it was the greatest joy for me to have my sons in my arms. When they were teenagers, it was still the greatest joy for me to walk around in the mall with them with my arm around their shoulders. And sometimes, you know, until they were that level of teenager where it's, "No Dad, no, no, no, not anymore Dad." I used to walk in the malls and everywhere and hold their hands and just be connected to them. I think there's a great powerful thing of connectedness. And that's the thing that makes Jesus different to us as our Lord and Saviour because we are connected to Him and He's connected to us. He wants us to know that He's present. He's present. He's real. He's present. He's not absent from us. He's present. And the way we know He's present, He makes His presence known to us. He's the Holy Spirit. Hallelujah.

It's a wonderful, wonderful thing. And now we're in a season, this season, right now we're in a season where there's a whole lot of celebration going on because tomorrow is Christmas Day. And so the world has earmarked it. I mean the world. This isn't a Bible thing. It's a world thing. But the world has earmarked Christmas Day to be somewhat of a celebration for the birth of Jesus. And I'm going to speak about His birth today in a way that is very different.

But praise the Lord. I'm very glad that Jesus was born. I'm even more pleased that He died. It's even better that He rose from the dead. Hallelujah. It would be a sad story if he had just been born. Because He would have lived forever, you know. Jesus would have lived forever because He had no sin in His body. So there was nothing that could kill Him. There was no sickness or disease. There was no ageing that could kill Him because He was born from the Father. And so the Father's life that was in His physical body couldn't die.

I'm not making a doctrine out of it but, you know, how was He going to die? Sin is what kills us. We are born with the sin DNA in our body, so sin kills us. It's not the life of God or the biology of our bodies that kills us. Sin is the thing that ages us and kills us. And not sin just through disease, it's sin that ages us. *Ja, nè.*

So anyway, He couldn't die and that is why when Pontius Pilate said, "Don't you know I have the power of your life?" And Jesus said, "No man has the power of My life except I'm the One that lays it down." In other words, there wasn't a thing on the earth that could kill Him. So I'm glad that He chose to die, so that the Father could raise Him up again, and that we could have the power of the Holy Spirit because He, the Holy Spirit, makes Jesus real to us, all of us, all the time, simultaneously, in the same way, as intensely as we want Him or not. Hey? The Holy Spirit is so amazing that He will not come and interfere with your choice of how much you want Him. The choice is yours. It's your desire. *Ja.* Praise the Lord.

Verse 4, I'm going to read to you verse 4 from The Message Translation. **4 Our motive for writing is simply this: We want you to enjoy this, too. Your joy will double our joy! (1 John 1:4 MSG).** So this is a season for us to have joy. Not just because we don't have to go to work. Or not just because we are going to maybe get some presents. Or because we are going to have a big, big lunch together. That's all, you know, with family or whatever that's going to make us feel like we are bloated for three days. *Ag nee man.* Anyway, but joy comes from the life of the Spirit. And this is a season for us to celebrate the life of the Spirit, and to enjoy the life that Jesus has given to us. Amen. Hallelujah. Amen.

I've got some really wonderful things that I can share with you today. And it's from Luke chapter 2, verse 25. I'm reading from the Living Translation. And then I will read some of this, little extracts of this from the New King James and from The Message Translation. But I just want to read this to you as a starter. Luke chapter 2, verse 25. ²⁵ **At that time there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon. He was righteous and devout and was eagerly waiting for the Messiah to come and rescue Israel.** I want to just say this about Simeon. I had a look at what the name Simeon means in Hebrew and it has a similar connotation in Aramaic as well as in Hebrew. And it actually means this; *oh, aha, alas*. So, in other words; that's it. That's what his name means. So just bear this in mind. It's just a small, little, by-the-side journey for you to enjoy something that I enjoyed. Because his name is Simeon. And so Simeon, ²⁵ **He was righteous and devout and was eagerly waiting for the Messiah to come and rescue Israel. The Holy Spirit was upon him. ²⁶ and had revealed to him that he would not die until he had seen the Lord's Messiah. ²⁷ That day, the Spirit led him to the Temple. So when Mary and Joseph came to present the baby Jesus to the Lord as the law required, ²⁸ Simeon was there (Luke 2:25-28 NLT).**

Now, I'm going to stop here for a moment because I just want you to understand that there were thousands of babies born in Israel every year. And every day, there were thousands of people that were bringing their babies to come and present them to the law, to the priests, to the religious order every day. This was part of what they had to do to come and present, especially the firstborn. They had to come and present the child after the period of sanctification or purification of the mother. So they came to present baby Jesus.

So you understand that there were, on any given day, there was some priest in the Temple doing this stuff. There was a whole ritual of things. Either someone would come with two turtles, one was a sanctification offering, and the other one was a burnt offering, and the other one was a purification offering. And so one of the turtles and or a lamb and a turtle, and one of the turtles or one of the animals would be killed and the blood would be used to put onto the wife as the end of her cycle of purification from the time that the baby was born. With me? This was a ritual that was happening every day. It sounds like a *gemors* (a mess). But you understand that the priesthood, the order of the Jewish law, the whole system was set up so that many people could come in. They could come with their lambs, they could come with their pigeons or turtles, they could come. This whole process wasn't something that was just a one-time thing like you read in the Bible like, oh, here's Jesus and Mary and Joseph and the Bible writes about it, so it's the only thing that happened that day. This was something that was happening all day, every day, all through the year. And of course, there was a whole process and a whole structure of what they would do with the dead animals, what they would do with the live animals, what they would do all of these things. I'm not going to go into all of that, I'm just wanting you to know that there's a whole system that was in place to manage what God said, this is the requirement of the law. Okay?

For Simeon to want to come to the temple on that day when it was not his place to be in duty, and as the account says, he was by this time an old man ready to die. The amount of time that he would have spent doing all of these things would have gotten less and less as the younger priests came in and took over the duties. Right? So this is no small matter that when the Scripture says, ²⁵ ... **The Holy Spirit was upon him. ²⁶ and had revealed to him that he would not die until he had seen the Lord's Messiah. ²⁷ That day, the Spirit led him to the Temple. (Luke 2:25-27 NLT).**

Now understand, he's not born again like you and me that has the Holy Spirit in him. That means when the Spirit of God was upon him and led him, there was a strong anointing on him to the point where he got up from where he was and went to the Temple. He had an unction, he had a powerful pull, the Holy Spirit was drawing him there because the Holy Spirit had been talking to him. That day the Spirit led him to the Temple. This is a very important moment for us to talk about. That day. That day. So the Holy Spirit had been on

him telling him, "You're not going to die until you see the Messiah."

So he knows by the Holy Spirit, he knows, "Hey, I'm old, but I'm not going to die until I see the Messiah." That means there's a timetable here. There's a window that's just opened. Doesn't your Bible say the Holy Spirit was on him? "There's a timetable that's opened here and you won't die until you've seen the Messiah." So in the timetable, when the Holy Spirit came upon him strongly, he's got to move. What do you think would have happened to Simeon if he just sat there on his chair or his puff pillows or whatever it is that he was doing? And he said, "Agh, you know what, I'm feeling a little bit miffed today. I'm tired with this whole religious process. I'm tired with all of the blood that gets shed. I'm tired with my whole life that I've been doing all this. Let the younger guys do it. It's my day off anyway. I think I'll just stay here." The Holy Spirit really didn't care what his day off was. The window was open on that day. Why was that day important? Because this was the end of the purification cycle.

So just so that you know about the purification cycle. If a woman had a child, a male child, in this case Jesus was a male child, so it's slightly different if she had a female child. But because she had a male child, the purification process was from the date of the birth of the male child, seven days would go by. On the eighth day, the child would be circumcised. And from that time, from the seventh day, another 33 days had to go by where she was to be purifying herself. Then on the 40th day, she would go to the Temple and present herself at the end of her purification time. So Simeon was not in charge of the time that Jesus was to be born. He was also not in charge of the timetable when the 40-day clock would start ticking after Jesus was born. But he's got the Holy Spirit on him that's telling him, "You're in the window, boy."

On this day, the Holy Spirit comes upon him with power or might and drives him to the Temple. Like I said, the Holy Spirit is not going to tell you or make you do anything you don't want to do, right? So he has this strong urge, "I've got to get up and I've got to go to the Temple." As he walks into the Temple, Joseph and Mary come walking into the Temple with Jesus. No coincidence in the life of a believer. So, ²⁷ **That day the Spirit led him to the Temple. So when Mary and Joseph came to present the baby Jesus to the Lord as the law required,** ²⁸ **Simeon was there. He took the child in his arms and praised God, saying, "Sovereign Lord, now let your servant die in peace, as you have promised. ³⁰ I have seen your salvation,** He's holding baby Jesus in his arms, this little 40-day baby, he's holding him in his arms. ³⁰ **I have seen your salvation,** ³¹ **which you have prepared for all people. ³² He is a light to reveal God to the nations, and he is the glory of your people Israel!" (Luke 2:29-32 NLT)** What is he doing? What is he doing? God needed a priest that would obey him, that was pure in his heart to come and declare, "The Most High Priest has arrived." But he came on his day off. There's no day off in the Spirit. There's no day off on your assignment. There's no day off in the things that God wants you to do. There is no day off. The spirit life is a real spirit life and the devil doesn't care what time of the year it is. He doesn't care what time of the year it is. When you least expect it, he will come and take you out if he can. But on the other side, God will use any given time for an opportunity for you to see the salvation of the Lord. I believe we are in that window of opportunity right now. This Church, this Ecclesia, Heritage of Faith, God has opened a window of opportunity for us right now to walk in it. It has been declared from the priests of this house. It has been declared. "What if you are wrong, Pastor John?" What if Simeon was wrong? Let me tell you, Zachariah wouldn't believe that his wife Elizabeth was going to have a child. So in order for his unbelief not to stop the process of the Baptist John, who was just a few months older than Jesus, because he needed to be a few months older than Jesus so he could prepare the way for Jesus to come. "Oh, Zachariah, you don't believe. You won't speak until your child is born because I can't have words come out of your mouth that are against the will of God. Hallelujah.

And so, what if we're wrong? I said, this is about finances. When Sharon and I, we did a big

investment into a corporate office block, a big building, commercial deal that we did, and Sharon said to me, one day she said, "John, what if you've got this whole thing wrong?" I said, "Sharon, my heart is pure before God, I love the Church, I serve the Church, I tithe, I'm an offerer, I love you the way Christ tells me to live my life, I love my children, I'm totally sold out to God in everything that I do in my life - if I've missed this, God's got me covered. God's got me covered."

And so, we owned this building and, eventually, at some time, the Lord spoke to me and He said, "John, you've either got to manage this thing or get out." But I knew, at that moment, the Lord was saying get out of it. I don't know how many years it's been now, it's 28, 30 years ago that we did this. But at that time, you know, I started to manage it. And when I started to manage it, I found things were not according to our partnership agreement. So, just like that, I'm sitting in a boardroom, just like that, my partner says, "But I want to buy you out." I say, "Okay, so make me an offer." "I want my brother-in-law to come and buy the shares." So, he comes and he makes me an offer with dollars and he wants to pay half of the deal in rands and the other half of the deal in dollars. And just like that, in a very short space of time, the deal was done, the dollars were paid, the rands were paid and I was out of the deal and moved on. Praise Jesus.

Well, some people could say, someone could say, but if God told you to get out of it after two years in it, maybe you shouldn't have been in it in the first place. I made quite a good sum of money, thank you. So, if I did the wrong thing, God blessed me anyway. He made it profitable for me anyway. Hello? You know what that kind of thing does? It gives you confidence that God's got your back. But, you know, I've put Him first place in everything I do. Everything, I put Him first place. I still do that. I put Him first place in everything that I do. When you do that, let me tell you, He's unwilling to do without someone like that. He's unwilling. Hallelujah.

So, ³³ **Jesus' parents**, verse 33, **Jesus' parents were amazed at what was being said about Jesus**. Well, maybe, because they'd never heard anybody else speak about Jesus like this. The last time there was any supernatural interaction was angels that came to them. Now, here's a human in the order and the authority of the priesthood that is speaking these words over their child. ³⁴ **Then Simeon blessed them, and he said to Mary, the baby's mother, "This child is destined to cause many in Israel to fall, and many others to rise. He has been sent as a sign from God, but many will oppose him. ³⁵ As a result, the deepest thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your very soul."** (Luke 2:34-35 NLT). Wow. I mean, here's the priest prophesying. This is someone who's the order of the priesthood who is prophesying. This is amazing. On this day, on this day. I don't know, I didn't research it, to be honest. I didn't think to research it as I'm talking to you now. I realise I didn't research it, but it wasn't essential to me. But I don't know how long afterwards, I don't know even if it's recorded. It might be recorded in some of the rabbinical manuals that we have, but it's not recorded in the Bible how long Simeon took to die after this. But I imagine after he had this encounter with Mary and Joseph and Jesus, he went back into his quarters because he prayed it, he said, "Your servant's ready to die. I don't have to live anymore. The reason I was put on this earth has been achieved. I'm ready to go." He might have just gone home, closed his eyes, lay in his bed. Peace of God is all over him. The anointing of the Holy Spirit that drew him is still on him and he just transitions from life into death. Just waiting a very short while in Abraham's bosom for the time that Jesus will come and preach to him and deliver him for eternity. Hallelujah.

Now just watch this. At the end of 40 days, there's Mary and Joseph and Jesus. They're in the Temple. Verse 36, ³⁶ **Anna, a prophet, or some correct translation would call her a prophetess, was also there in the Temple. She was the daughter of Phaniel from the tribe of Asher, and she was very old. Her husband died when they had been married only seven years.** If you read this in the New King James or the King James version, it

doesn't read as easily as I've just read it to you now. That's why I chose to read it to you like this. **Her husband died when they had been married only seven years.** ³⁷ **Then she lived as a widow to the age of eighty-four (Luke 2:36-37 NLT).**

So I just did a little bit of maths. You can tell me I'm wrong, okay, no problem. Those days, women used to marry at the age of 14, 15, 16. That was their marrying age. That was their prime birthing age. If she was married at 16, let's just say, 16, and her husband died after seven years, that would have put her at 23. She's now 84. So that puts her about 59 years on her own. You got me? ³⁷ ... **she lived as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the Temple but stayed there day and night, worshipping God with fasting and prayer (Luke 2:37 NLT).** You know, sometimes we think, "Ah, we got a few hours in church, that's a lot." Well, it's only a lot based on how much value you put on church life and how much you think church life can influence and affect your future. Because if you have a view that says, "Every time I go to church, it's a really good place to be because God's speaking there all the time. I'm ready to listen when I'm there all the time. So my whole future is so wrapped up in God, the more I can be around God's people and in church and have the Holy Spirit in corporate anointing, the better."

Part of my confidence on the business deal I spoke about is because when I was in the corporate world I used to win all these prizes to go with Sharon, and corporate incentives, go to the Cayman Islands in Australia, the Great Barrier Reef or to go skiing in Europe or go to different places. Those things were all expenses paid for Sharon and I to go and be with everybody and go and do all these trips. I always used to be put in for the opportunity to be the manager that stays behind because a manager had to stay behind, a sales manager, so that I could use the whole amount of money allocated so that I could take Sharon and my boys and go to faith conferences in America. "But Pastor John, you could have gone to all these five-star luxury hotels and resorts and all of these things." I could have. I didn't want to. I wanted to go to a place where there was anointing, where God's people were. I wanted to go and sit for days and days and days under the Word of God. That's where I wanted to be, more than I wanted to be on a desert by the sea, or on some snow skiing resort. So when I say to you, I had confidence in God, it's because my whole life was committed to doing His Word and His ways, not to my agenda when it suited me. Amen. Praise the Lord.

I can put it to you this way; I gave up many adventures to go on a spiritual sabbatical. Many adventures; fully paid for, high-class, high-quality adventures so that I could go on spiritual sabbaticals, just hear me out now. What is God putting back into my life all of these years of my life? Didn't He put me together with a man whose whole thing is called *Adventures in Faith*? Because I'm an adventurous person. I love adventure, and now I'm getting so much adventure, I don't know what to do with all of it. I've got to squeeze it in time. But I paid the price for this a long time ago. You know why God's blessing me with all these things now? Because He knows He can trust me that there's no adventure that will take the place of Jesus in my heart. There's no material substance. There's no lifetime adventure. There's no, any opportunity. You think that when God said to me, "John, I want to do you a favour," and suddenly I had it in my heart I want to go and do the Cape Epic and God pays for it. He gets me new bicycles. He gives me a world-class coach. He gives me everything that I need to have to get through this thing. You think it's because He's going to be less important to me? On the contrary, everything He's given me shows me how much His affection is towards me, that He wants to give me something that I don't even know how to ever even ask for. That's because I paid for it a long time ago. I paid for it. That wasn't a hard price for me to pay. That was my heart's desire to serve Him, to go after Him, to put myself in places where I know it would please Him, where my family could grow, where we could be exposed. It's because I went to all those things that I got connected to Brother Jerry. It's because I went to all of those things that Bryn and I would be standing in front of Brother Jerry's PA's desk at that time, and someone would phone, and just like that we were off and we were sitting on the

stage at Kenneth E. Hagin's meetings when people just couldn't pay to get there. God favoured us to get there because I was in God's will.

I can say I was like Simeon, on that day I was in the right place at the right time. I don't want to be in the right place at the right time by some luck. That's what the world says when things happen to them - you were in the right place at the right time, so it just happened to you. Let me tell you, it's my declaration all the time, "I'm always in the right place at the right time." There was a time when the devil tried to lie to me that I was five minutes late. Do you remember those messages? The Lord said to me, "You're not five minutes late, John, you're always on time." Praise the Lord.

Just listen to what happens to this Anna. So she's worshipping God with fasting and prayer. ³⁸ **She came along just as Simeon was talking with Mary and Joseph, and she began praising God. She talked about the child to everyone who had been waiting expectantly for God to rescue Jerusalem (Luke 2:38 NLT).** I want to read this to you from the New King James, that verse, verse 38. ³⁸ **And coming in that instant she gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem (Luke 2:38 NKJV).** So here's this old woman. Come on now, just work with me for a minute. Here's this old woman. What is the order in the Jewish order of things? Old women are to be respected, they are to be honoured, they are to be blessed. They are supposed to be given the place of honour by younger women that the older woman must teach the younger woman. In our modern day age, we're getting it all wrong because the young girls think they've got to teach the old woman things. Because the young girls think that they are the ones that are on social media and they've got the whole thing wrapped up. God's order never changed. It didn't change then and it hasn't changed now. God says older women, you must be spiritual, you must have a place with God and you must teach the younger women. Here's an old woman who's a widow. She's been living day and night in the Temple. She sees Jesus. She hears Simeon. The instant she hears him talk, the prophet that is Anna, recognises this is the Messiah and all of the honour that has been given to her in the community, she now lets it work. She keeps going around telling everybody the Redeemer's here, the Messiah's here, the Redeemer here, the Saviour of Israel has come. He's arrived. She's not saying it's Jesus. She just knows the time has come.

You know, in our modern-day world the way we would handle it is, "Prove it to me. Show it to me. Show me some proof that this is the time, this is the way it's got to happen, show me." She says, "I don't have to show you anything. I'm telling you by the Spirit of God, the time has come. For many people hearing her, and of course Jesus only dying 33 years later, you know, that would seem like that old woman was crazy because she said the Redeemer's come. It was 30 years before He got into His ministry and began to heal people and show who He was. By that time most people she was talking to probably died already. But God didn't require that they hear her. He just required that she declare it.

I'm telling you there's some things that we have to do, Pastor Sharon and I, it doesn't require that people hear it. We have to declare it. We have to speak it because we are under the anointing and under the mantle of the Holy Spirit. If you hear it, then better because you can go with God on it.

So, ³⁹ **When Jesus' parents, verse 39, had fulfilled all the requirements of the law of the Lord, they returned home to Nazareth in Galilee.** ⁴⁰ **There the child grew up healthy and strong. He was filled with wisdom, and God's favour was on him (Luke 2:39-40 NLT).** It is my prayer that all of our children will be strong and healthy and grow up in the wisdom of God with His favour upon them. Hallelujah. It is my prayer that this will be the order of things in this House, in this spiritual House, that all of the children that are in this House, all of them will grow up strong, healthy, in the wisdom of God with His favour upon them. Hallelujah. Amen.

So, this is verse 40. Are you with me here? I'm nearly done. I just want to show you how in this passage of Scripture this event happens and I'm wanting to just share with you that we got to put binocular vision on, and we got to see through the eyes of Jesus for our future, not just what's happening in front of us. Simeon was being led by the Holy Spirit. On that day, he was led to the Temple. He got to see the salvation of the Lord. He goes on to be in eternity, He knows God has fulfilled what He said He would fulfil. Amen.

Jesus, on the other hand, is just beginning His journey. Verse 41, **⁴¹ Every year, Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the Passover festival. ⁴² When Jesus was twelve years old, they attended the festival as usual. ⁴³ After the celebration was over, they started home to Nazareth, but Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem.** He's twelve. I wonder what our 12-year-old kids look like. ⁴³ ... **His parents didn't miss Him at first, ⁴⁴ because they assumed He was among the other travellers. But when He didn't show up that evening, they started looking for Him among their relatives and friends. ⁴⁵ When they couldn't find Him, they went back to Jerusalem to search for Him there. ⁴⁶ Three days later they finally discovered Him in the Temple (Luke 2:41-46 NLT).** Well, of course, they're looking for Him in the whole of Jerusalem. Where do you look for a twelve-year-old boy? Not in the Temple. But this is not just a twelve-year-old boy. ⁴⁶ **Three days later they finally discovered Him in the Temple, sitting among the religious teachers, listening to them and asking questions. ⁴⁷ All who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers. ⁴⁸ His parents didn't know what to think. "Son," His mother said to Him, "why have You done this to us? Your father and I have been frantic, searching for You everywhere." His question to them, ⁴⁹ "But why do you need to search?" He asked. "Didn't you know that I must be in My Father's house?" ⁵⁰ But they didn't understand what He meant. ⁵¹ Then He returned to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. And His mother stored all these things in her heart. ⁵² Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature and in favour with God and all the people (Luke 2:46-52 NLT).** Praise the Lord.

Now, I just want to conclude with this and say to you that in this season of celebration of Christmas, it's a wonderful time for us to take a pause in some ways and for us to reflect. But I'm not losing sight of the fact that this is just any other day. Tomorrow, Christmas Day, is just another 12-hour day. The sun will rise and the sun will set. The fact that everybody's going crazy about so many different things, it's just another day. On earth, it's just another day. In the spirit realm, there's a clock ticking. There's activities happening in the spirit realm. If you don't have eyes to see that, then all you can deal with is what's in the natural.

If that's how Simeon was, he would never have seen the salvation of the Lord. If that's how Anna was, she would not have been able to talk about redemption. In fact, the thing about Jesus' parents is that they didn't consider His stature as an eternal being when they were looking for their Son. Jesus just reminded them. He said, "Hey, Mom and Dad, I'm obedient to you, but I've got a higher obedience that I've got to follow." I have a higher obedience that I've got to follow. He's 12. "I have a higher obedience that I've got to follow. I will still continue to be obedient to you, but I'm making a declaration. I must be about My Father's business before yours." Hello. He was telling them, "I'm on a spiritual timetable, not your timetable, Mom and Dad." How do you want our kids in this church, how do you want our kids to grow up? Do you want them to be aware of the spiritual timetable? Do you want them to say, "Hey, we're pursuing, what's God's business for us? What's God's business for us? What's God's business for us? What's God's business?" Rather than just say, "Well, you know, the world says this is what we've got to do next and this is what we got to do next. And so we just do the next thing." And before we know it, our kids are 22, 23, 24 years old and they've just, for their whole life, they've just been doing the next thing, the next thing, the next thing. And there's not even a question about what's God's will? What's God's will? "But the world will tell you what God ..." No, they won't. Parents, you have to decide what you want in life. Whether

you want to be spiritual and you want to hear what God has got to say to you and you can be spiritual to your kids. Hallelujah.

So, when you are at this timetable of Christmas day and if you're planning to have a family lunch, you're planning to have a family *braai*, you're planning to just, have a family time or whatever it is you're going to do over this time tomorrow and the next day, that's a public holiday. Whatever you are planning to do, give time to be spiritual. Give time to put your spiritual binoculars on. Give time to say, "Lord, there's something that I need to see. Let Your Spirit be upon me. Let Your Spirit show me. Be strong inside of me." Let us be spiritual about these days rather than just see Father Christmas everywhere, or a Christmas tree with lights, or presents, or whatever it is people do on Christmas time. We quit giving presents as a family a long time ago. We just see it as a money-making ritual and we don't like it, we have stopped doing it, I don't know, 20, 30 years ago. That's our choice. You don't have to do that. You can put whatever kind of bells and whistles and bows and things and trees and do your thing. But we have chosen to make it about relationships and we've chosen to make them more meaningful and more restful. Isn't it amazing that people go crazy going to all the shops to buy shampoos, and soaps, and socks, and things, and then they give out all these little gifts. They go crazy running around, buy, buy, buy. For days they get frantic and they're all distracted. They sit under a tree for 10 minutes and they hand out these presents and everybody says, "Oh, that's so nice, thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you." And they go home and say, "Eish, I've got to wear these socks." You can see where my mind is at, right? But we just decided, a long time ago, as a family, we will focus on things that are more eternal and more purposeful and more meaningful and spend time building relational things rather than customs. Customs. But however you choose, if you get a thrill out of receiving socks and soap, be my guest. Have fun at it. I mean it. Really, I do. Have fun at it. If that tickles you, and makes you tick ... Amen. Let it tick you. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

But, in the 'feeling great about the whole thing', you know, feel great about Jesus. Feel great about the Holy Spirit. Feel great about actually, this is a really significant time where God's opened a window of opportunity for us and it's time for us to be ready, to be a witness, to see things that God is going to do. To walk into things that God has prepared for us. Amen. Hallelujah.

Did you get something out of this message this morning? You better say yes, otherwise I'll send my angel to beat you - over Christmas, *nogal too*. Hallelujah. Praise the Lord. Don't you want to all stand with me, please? Hallelujah. Praise Jesus.

Well, I don't want to just make an assumption that everybody that's in church today is always in church today. So, I would like you all to pray a prayer with me and let's all pray together and if you're here, and this is you visiting, or this is the first time or in a long time you've come to church, then if you really want your life to be significant, and you want a different level of Christian experience, and a life with God experience, then just pray this prayer with us. And if you're wanting to just step up and renew what you do, who you are spiritually, then pray this prayer with us. Will you?

Take your hand, put it on your heart. Say;, Jesus, I confess You are my Lord and Saviour. Thank You for dying for me. Thank You for saving me from this day onwards. You are my Father, I am Your child. I will love You. I will serve You and I will fulfil all that you have for my life in Jesus' Name. Hallelujah.

Hey, sons of God, that's a pretty cool thing to do. That's a pretty cool thing to say. And so I declare that you are blessed as you go about today, tomorrow and the next day. You are blessed. You are blessed with peace, you are blessed with smooth, smooth days, smooth time. No complications, no harassment, no hard things, no family tough times and boxing matches. Have freedom. Have peace. Have joy. Have the presence of God as part of what

you do and where you go, in Jesus' name.

You are blessed going out and blessed coming in. I pray that you will experience the joy of the Holy Spirit much more than the joy of Christmas. Experience the joy of the Holy Spirit, the joy of Jesus, the joy of the Heavenly Father. And you all say; Amen. Well, thank you for coming to church. Enjoy lunchtime.