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Crossover Part 23: Kingdom and Ecclesia Economics

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Scripture reference: Matthew 6:33-34 (TPT); Acts 2:40-47 (NKJV); Acts 4:32-37 (NKJV); Acts 5:1-11 (NKJV)

Well, that's what happens when you do cross over, you know. Unexpected things happen. How many of you are ready for unexpected things to happen in church services? Yeah, we're ready. That's the thing about crossing over is unexpected. It's unexpected. When you get to the other side, you're not exactly sure what you find there. But it doesn't matter because the God of all peace, the God of all strength, the God of courage, the God of power is with us. Whatever we find there, we are victorious, we conquer. We're ready for everything and equal to anything. Hallelujah. Praise the Lord.

Now, Denholm, it's good to have you back. I didn't know you were blonde. But now I see that you are. It looks good on you with a bit of a tanned skin too, *nogal*. Hallelujah. Isn't it wonderful to be in the house of the Lord? Yes, it's wonderful. Before you sit down, just turn to somebody and say, "I'm glad you're in the house of the Lord," and then turn to someone else and then you may be seated.

I just have one or two announcements to make. First thing I want to say is on Sunday the 28th of January, that's two Sundays from now, we'll do a water baptism. So, we'll share the logistics and all of the arrangements with you, but we'll do water baptism on Sunday the 28th. Amen. Praise the Lord. These water baptisms are always such an amazing thing. Really, the Spirit of God is always present. It's an amazing experience for everybody to have that gets baptised in water. It's always a life-changing moment. Always. Then I also want to say that I have no fear of God meeting our needs. So, I believe that the Word of God does its work in you as a ministry. For a long time we have not been taking up Sunday morning offerings. Over this December period, the Lord just began to deal with me, and He said in this Crossover period, God is going to want to do things for you. He's wanting us to have prayers prayed on a regular basis so that every week you are reminded that God is touching your money, He's touching your economy, He's touching your world. So we're going to be taking up offerings every Sunday. It's not so much how much money you put in because I know most of you do EFT transfers and you do your monthly, of your income you do electronic transfer. But I would encourage you to do something with you that you can just put in the offering, that you can say even if it's a small amount of money that you can connect with us in faith for what God is doing this year in our Crossover.

There's lots of things that God is wanting to do, He's going to do, and I believe this is part of the wisdom. When Jesus took the loaves and fishes He spoke to the Father and then He multiplied it. And so that's what I believe the Lord wants us to do is every week we're going to pray. This is not going to be a ritual, and that's part of why I stopped doing it on Sunday mornings because I don't want our offerings to be rituals. This has got to be in our heart. It's got to be something that we do because we want to do this, because we are connected with it in our faith. And so, just because we stopped it for a while doesn't mean we got to keep stopping it. And so, I just like to follow the Lord on these things, so that's what we're going to do. We all good? We'll start that next week. Amen.

The other thing is I'm going to keep preaching on Ecclesia Economics until - I said to the Lord yesterday because I felt like I needed to get done this weekend. The Lord began to say to me, "I got things I want to say through you, and I got things ..." I know Pastor Sharon has been sharing some things with me. I know she has got some things that the Lord has given her and so we just got to keep going until the Lord has said what He needs to say. Hallelujah. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord.

I am going to use the Church, this church in Witbank as an example of how God can do something. When I started our church in Witbank and in Johannesburg, the Johannesburg church grew at a rate of nuts, grew big very quickly. I soon discovered that what people were looking for in a church was another organisation that was excellent. And it would reflect their values and their identity. So they want to be connected to a church that says this is what I stand for, this is what I am comfortable with, this is what I like people - if anybody asks me what church I go to then I say I go to that church, then it must reflect what I am comfortable with, what my identity is. And so I began to realise some of the things that I told you yesterday about big cities and about people in the cities; the energy, the can do's and all of that kind of stuff, it gets reflected in the church. But the Lord had called me to uproot, to pull down, and to build. In those things, there is an obedience to the Lord that must matter.

Over the years I've had to make very important decisions. One of the important decisions that became a foundation to our ministry is that we don't promote people in the ministry because they're talented. People get promoted because God promotes them because God sees their hearts. Over the years we've had very talented people come into the ministry.

Now, come on, if you're a church and you're a pastor and you're wanting to be a significant voice in a community, and talented people come to your church, isn't this a way to bring more people to your church? Because when they see talented people come to your church, they say, "Well, if talented people go there, then that's also good enough for me." It helps with the identity thing. Right? It helps with that.

If you're a pastor and talented people are coming to your church, then wow, that's quite something. The quicker you give them a profile, the quicker people will see these talented people and the more other talented people will want to come. Because those talented people will say, "Hey, you know this pastor recognises my talent, and he's okay with my talent, and so if I get promoted then I must tell my other talented friends this is the place to come." But it comes with a sting. The minute you expect a talented person to grow in God, and they don't want to, what happens then? Huh? Then they don't want to be part of that, "You're confronting me, I don't like it. Oh, now you're expecting something more from me than my talent. Now you're expecting me to actually be spiritual and grow here?" "Yes, I do." "Well, I'm not comfortable with the way you want me to grow, I'll do it in my time, I'll do it in my way." Talented people. Come on, that's the way talented people work.

You know, some of the talented musicians that are on the stage here, they have been operating in the industry, and one of the things that they will tell you, the biggest problem they have in the music industry is talented people have big egos. So if it doesn't quite fit their mode and their model of how to work, "I'm out because you're offending my ego." Right?

We, as a ministry, Pastor Sharon and I, me before the Lord, I had to make some big decisions. If we run our ministry on talent, then we will always expect talent. So here's what talent does, it raises the standard. Yeah? So you can have a high standard of excellence, but you can have a very poor, low level of spirituality. So if you're going to be a pastor that lives in a community that lives with people for a long time, you've got to make a quality decision; am I going to work with people that want to serve God, or am I going to work with talented people? I'll never forget a Sunday night service we had in Johannesburg. We rented a hall, it used to be a Damlon campus, and they had closed the campus down, and so we rented their hall, and it was just a great facility for us. There was lots of parking, there was lots of everything, and they allowed us to upgrade the auditorium, the lecture room, and we could fit maybe three hundred people in that auditorium. One Sunday night, I found out that half of the Gauteng Lions rugby team were sitting in the service. Half of the Gauteng Lions team was sitting in the service. Wow. You know? Wow. What does that tell you? Someone is talking to them about what they're hearing, telling them what they've been hearing, now they

want to come and hear for themselves. Now I've got a decision to make. So some of them started coming back, they came for a couple of weeks, they want to hear what I have to say. They want to hear what's going on here. They want to know, if I'm a high profile sportsman, is this church going to work with my image, my identity? Will it also tell me the things I need to be hearing without placing too much demand on me, because after all, I'm a big name, and I've got to be travelling around, and there'll be many Sundays I can't come. But you get my drift. I had to go before the Lord. I said, "Lord, you know, this is pretty cool. The word's getting around." Like I said, our church just exploded, and before we knew it, we had six hundred people, seven hundred people that were coming to the church. We ran out of space in that church. We had to go to a different auditorium. I mean, it was just happening. Because if you break down the message of faith, it's a very success-oriented message. It's a 'can-do' message. It's 'let's live life large' message, right? And especially when people had heard about me, people really want to be successful financially, and I demonstrated success financially in my personal life by faith; with faith. And people want to have successful relationships. I was a living example of a successful relationship. What you saw is what you got. You still get what you see. But I had to make a decision whether I was going to cater to image people, talented people that wanted what they want out of church, or I had to stick with what God told me; to build disciples.

When you confront a talented person, whether they want to be a disciple or not, what's the biggest thing they're challenged with? When discipleship challenges my talent, which do I choose? What my talent can do, or what my choices for God will do? Right? I'm using the word talent. It can be skill. It can be opportunity. It can be many things. So you have a choice to make. I had a choice to make. My choice was, I'm going to keep preaching what God told me to preach. I'm going to keep laying it out there and challenge everybody to be a disciple. I'm going to keep challenging everybody to live for God. Make the choice to live for Jesus. Make the choice to live for God. Make a spiritual decision every day. God birthed something out of me at that time and He said, "Everywhere you go, I want you to ask people; what's the point of being a Christian?" The point of being a Christian is not just so that you can go to heaven, it's so that Christians can become spiritual. So what's the point of being spiritual? Because only spiritual people can bring heaven to earth, can live in the Kingdom.

So when I challenge people like that, they are always going to be faced with a choice. What does a spirit life look like versus what does a life in my talent look like? If your talent is exceptional enough or high enough or excellent enough, there's a real possibility that you can live your whole life with whatever your talent brings. It can provide for you. It can support you. It can do everything that you need for your own image, your own ego, your own identity. It can provide for you. So when you're faced with that versus I'm faced with being spiritual, the spiritual component has a level of uncertainty to your natural man. The uncertainty to your natural man is how spiritual do I have to be to get the same rewards as my talent can bring? So you don't know how spiritual, when you're in that state, you don't know how spiritual you must become so that your spirit life provides for your natural world. Because of the uncertainty of what that spirit life looks like, most talented people make a decision for their talent. They fail to recognise that they don't have the talent that is just theirs. They fail to recognise that God gave them the talent. So by choosing their talent, they say, "I'm making myself the head of my talent." Even though I've watched many sportsmen at a high level come and stand in front of a mic and say, "I just want to give glory to God," and because they do that, they think that they are giving their best to God. I've said this before, God doesn't need their two seconds of fame on a microphone that talks to 50,000 people or a million people or 10 or 100 million people to be famous. I wonder how many people actually get saved when someone says, "I just want to give glory to God for actually helping me win this match and now let's move on." I wonder how many people are actually confronted with their Christianity and with their religion from those two seconds? But they feel better because they've given their bit to God. And that applies to musicians, it applies to business people. I don't mind walking into a business meeting, into a boardroom and on my portfolio, I've got a

fish. And I put my leather thing down and everybody sees I've got a fish and I've got a scripture quoted there. Now everybody knows I'm a Christian. Well, I'm giving glory to God through my talent as a businessman to make money. Really? No. Where you're going to make a difference is when your life is a disciple life. I'm already preaching really good. I'm already nailing this thing this morning by the Holy Spirit.

If I went ahead and I used to say this to people, if I wanted to build a church on talent and marketing, I could have built a big one. And I can tell you we would have had a mega church in Joburg, we would have had a mega church in Witbank and many mega churches all over the country because I could have taken the things I learned in the corporate world as a marketing person and I could have applied them to the church. We would have had the best of the best and I promise you we would have attracted the talent.

I had to make a decision. I've got to go with the uncertain root. What's the uncertain root? The uncertain root is I've got to obey God and let Him show what that looks like. As I pursued God in my gifting and my calling with Him, somehow the talented people don't like to come to church where they are constantly reminded that there's a greater God than them. They don't like to be reminded constantly that actually they need to bow before Jesus, before the Holy Spirit. They need to praise and give thanks to God daily for their talent. They need to be humble about it.

Somehow, when the world system starts to promote them, and starts to glorify them and exalt them, somehow that thing just gets blown out of proportion and they become, 'the it'. And, you know, it doesn't have to always be headlines and news. If that is you in your own mind, in your own world, it is just as problematic because you are a legend in your own mind. You are the talent in your own mind, and you don't even have to have anybody telling you how great your talent is. You might just believe it for yourself. And if you believe it for yourself, then that is going to be the image of, "Ah, I won't listen to what someone has to tell me because they are demanding, the Lord is demanding through that messenger, that I must do what I must do." So, I had to make a decision. Do I build a mega church or do I preach what God wants me to preach? So, have a look around you. These are disciples. These are people that live for God. But look what God is doing. God is also bringing talented people into our ministry. But now the people that are coming into the ministry are coming in here because there is an authentic discipleship fabric that has been built here. It didn't happen in five years, and have a mega church in five years, and suddenly we were on TV, and suddenly we have got all of these things, and suddenly everybody is talking about our church and everybody is talking about, "Have you heard? Did you know that Pastor John and Sharon, they used to be at Rhema, and now suddenly, have you seen how big their church is?" And that was what was happening in Joburg North. People were talking about us all the time, everywhere, every coffee shop, people were talking about us, "That's the church you've got to go to. It's happening there. Those guys, they are with it. And you know, Pastor John, he had a successful corporate career, they have got a good marriage, they have a good family life. These people, they have got it." I know, we heard it. People fed back to us. That is what people were talking about. Yeah, thank you Sharon, "And he's connected to Brother Jerry and Brother Copeland. He is on all of those things," and hey, if you want to talk about what we had for identity, we had it.

So why are you telling us this? Because as I talk to you about Kingdom Economics and about Ecclesia Economics, and you say to me and I answer your question, you say, "Pastor John, is it possible to live in Ecclesia and Kingdom Economics without the world system?" I have to say this to you; you won't know how God can actually make you wealthy until you commit to it. What does the plan look like? I don't know. Because it's going to be personal to every one of you. You have to have a Kingdom experience. You do. I can't have your Kingdom experience.

I'm going to read the Bible to you where we can have an Ecclesia experience and the Ecclesia experience is a very powerful thing and I'm going to show you how the Ecclesia, the called out church of God, can make a difference. Now just let me say one more thing before I move on here. What I'm telling you today is no nonsense, decision making, lifetime living where you take a risk about your whole future. When I was born, I mean from when I can remember way back when I gave my life to Jesus at five years old, as way back as I can remember, I knew God. I knew I was called to preach. I knew I was called to be a pastor and do what I'm doing. So, when the choice comes, "Are you going to put your whole life's calling on the line here, John? Because you've got a choice. The talented people are coming. Your calling, your whole life you've been living with God, your own discipleship is bringing people. Now you want to put all of that at risk by talking about the narrow road and few that find the narrow road. You want to put all of that at risk. Don't you understand? Your whole life's at risk here, John, because you were born for this calling and if people don't accept your calling, then what do you have? And if the talented people don't affirm your calling, then who's going to? So do you want a church void of talented people or do you want a church full of talented people that brings all the other people that are not talented?" Like somehow people that are not talented are not as worthy. That people that are not talented are not quite as good as others. That somehow they're second class citizens compared to the talented people. And of course it's the talented high society, many numbers after they name people, that actually have the influence and they are the ones that make things happen. So, you've got to draw them, otherwise you don't have a ministry. The devil's going to come, this message is going to challenge you on the same level. What choices are you going to make for your life? Are you going to choose that you have to have the affirmation of the system and you've got to be working the system or are you going to say, "I want to know what God's got?" Okay. Are you all with me still? I haven't left you behind somewhere. Okay.

Part of why you love me is because I'm a no nonsense person and I talk like this, right? I'm not scared of bringing out the real stuff. If we can't be real in church, then where can we be real? Huh?

I'm busy training for the Absa Cape Epic. Thank You, Jesus. So, as I'm travelling on my journey, I've got a goal that I've got to achieve, a certain level of fitness that I've got to achieve. I'm busy facing a number of issues. I'm facing fitness issues, I'm facing nutrition issues, I'm facing hydration questions, I'm facing skill things, levels of skill. For me to be able to accomplish this, there's a whole range of things I've got to give attention to. So, as I'm going along, I discover that there are some things that happen to me that are out of left field, just things that you don't expect that you have to deal with.

I mean, we went for a ride on Friday. My Garmin said the top temperature out there was 41 degrees. I had three bottles of water that I drank in nearly five hours of riding.

What do you think happened to me? I got dehydrated. I underestimated, because all the rides that I do, out to that place, is early in the morning. But when you're riding in the daytime, it's a different story. So, by the time we were getting back, I was asking people for water. "Have you got extra water? Have you got extra water?" Some people were sharing their water with me. I was 'man down'. Okay, I can live with the short-term problem. I got into bed on Friday night - I didn't share this with you yesterday - but I got into bed Friday night and my legs were tingling. I tried to get to sleep. I struggled to get to sleep. My heart rate was high. And when I did fall asleep, I got woken by my calf muscle that was in a full cramp. Full-on cramp. I jumped out of the bed, you know. *[Pastor John demonstrating how sore it was]* I mean, it was painful. It's painful.

What am I living? I'm living in an in-between state right now. I'm living in between my goal that I want to achieve and the reality of where I'm moving towards a goal. Right?

If I say, what happened to me this weekend is, "Oh, now I think I can't make it. I don't think that I'm strong enough. I don't think I'm fit enough. I don't think I'm going to make it. We're only about nine, ten weeks away from doing the Epic." Suddenly, we're almost there. Huh? Praise Jesus. But if I allowed that one thing that happened to me on Friday night to come and affect me and change my mind. Come on now, listen to me. Because there's a human part of this. I'm not even going to put it onto the devil. It's just a human part of this that says, "Hey, if you're struggling with these things, what makes you think you're going to get through the Epic?" What do you think happens when you decide, I'm going to live for God, and I'm going to go Kingdom economics, and I'm going to go Ecclesia economics, and something doesn't quite go your way. Suddenly, you find you owe somebody money you didn't expect. Maybe your car breaks. Maybe there's a bill that needs to get paid. Maybe something happens and, "Hey, I just thought I'm on this new revelation track. I'm going to live within Kingdom economics," and suddenly, what is the next thing you think?. How am I ever going to cross over? How am I ever going to get to Kingdom economics and Ecclesia economics? How am I ever going to do this when I can't just fix one little problem? You can't allow your mind to think like that. You have to make a quality decision and the quality decision is ... If I didn't make a quality decision when we started pastoring that I was going to follow God and He's calling on my life, when the talented people started arriving, I would have started adjusting my calling and adjusting my message and adjusting the way we do church, because I want more talent, more talent, more people to affirm, get a bigger, bigger, bigger, bigger, because this is grand. This is cool. We are the next big name that's happening in church circles.

If I didn't have a plumb line that said I've got to obey God more than anything else, even what we have right now would never have happened. We might have, Pastor Sharon and I might have been in your household by name, by television, but we might never have got to know you. We would never know anybody that is a disciple or not a disciple. All we would know is people listen to our message. I knew from a long time back that's not what God called me to do. He didn't want me to be what other people wanted me to be. He wanted me to follow Him based on what He called me to be. Hallelujah.

I want to say to you that I'm so glad God brought you into my life and that you are in each other's lives because the very fact that I can preach this message to you is already a demonstration of the level of discipleship that we have reached as a church because there's very few churches that we can preach this message in. There's very few churches that can hear this kind of message. Hey?

Well, this message that I'm wanting to preach to you is like this; if a father, if you're a father, what do you want to do for your family? Don't you want to provide for them? Don't you want to protect them and care for them? Won't you do everything for your kids? Right? I mean that's just a natural father. So what about a Heavenly Father? Doesn't He want to take care of you? Doesn't He want to protect you? Does He want to provide for you? Meantime you say, "No thank You, Dad, I've got it covered. I don't really want to hear what You have to say in Your Word about how I can get this stuff, how You want to provide this stuff." Because He said in Matthew chapter 6, "If you seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, all these little things, less important things will all be added to you in abundance." By who? By Father. That revelation came from Drew. Thank you, Drew. I told him yesterday I would share it because he shared it with me. Thank you, Drew. Amen. I mean that was a big thing in Drew yesterday because he was saying to me, "I get it, I get it, Pastor John. The Father wants to take care of us. And we need to be in a place where we let Him take care of us." How are you going to let Him take care of you if you're all the time saying, "I don't really believe you. The system of all the people that affirm to me that I'm connected to all the system, this is the way I'm going to do it."

How do you ask God to bless you through a system when His whole system is completely different? So, I'm here to say to you; I don't want you to walk out of here this day or any other day that we're preaching about economics. I don't want you to walk out of here and to say, and think to yourself, I don't know that I can make it. What I want you to do is to say; I recognise that I'm in a system. I've got to set some goals. I've got to make a strategic quality decision that I'm going to move into God's system. I don't need you to be resigning from your jobs. I don't want you to be resigning from your jobs. I don't want you to be changing anything dramatically in the short term. What I want you to do is, I want you to believe that God has a different way for you to do things. And you need to start speaking God's way of doing things and you start believing God's way of doing things because if you don't start there, you're not going to start anywhere. Hey? And so the uncertainty factor is a factor you have to deal with. And that's where courage comes from. It's where bravery needs to be there. It's where faith and trust... This is what the Lord said to me, early hours of this morning, the Lord said to me, "It's the trust issue, John. People don't trust their Heavenly Father because they don't know Me well enough. They know Me through the way the system thinks, the way that they see Me through the system that they think I'm providing for them through the system. So when the system doesn't work for them and they're not having all the results that they think they need to have, then they blame Me. But actually, I've got a whole different system and they don't trust Me."

What happens if you lose trust in a father? *Ja*, that's a hard place to be because how do you get it back? Well, if you've lost trust in the Father, it's because you've allowed your heart to get damaged because He's trustworthy. He's trustworthy. You can take the best earthly father that you can ever imagine, you can take that father and you can stack him up against God, and he will pale in insignificance as a father compared to the Heavenly Father. There's no equivalent to the Heavenly Father. He's love all the time. He's providing all the time. He's blessing all the time. He's protecting all the time. He never slumbers. He never sleeps. His whole focus, His eye is on you. His affection is for you. He's always thinking about you. He always wants the best for you. He sends His angels to help you, His ministering spirits for you. The Holy Spirit is sent to you. Jesus died for you because He wanted a salvation for you. He is the best Father you could ever imagine. Let's trust Him. Let's start on a journey of trust. Let's trust the Heavenly Father. Praise the Lord. Don't you think this is good?

Remember I read you yesterday from Matthew 6 verse 33 in The Passion Translation. ³³ **"So above all, constantly chase after the realm of God's kingdom and the righteousness that proceeds from him. Then all these less important things will be given to you abundantly. ³⁴ Refuse to worry about tomorrow, but deal with each challenge that comes your way, one day at a time. Tomorrow will take care of itself."** (Matthew 6:33-34 TPT). Here's the answer about how we cross over from a natural living, a system-based living, to a Kingdom living. Don't try and project what you do today into tomorrow. "How am I going to make a difference tomorrow?" Let's just live for God today. Let's just live for God today. Okay, are you still with me?

Remember yesterday I said, Jesus said to them, "But you shall receive power of the Holy Spirit, it has come upon you?" I'm going to read to you Acts chapter 2 verse 40, ⁴⁰ **And with many other words, in the New King James Version, Acts 2 verse 40. ⁴⁰ And with many other words He testified, and exhorted them, saying, Be saved from this perverse generation (Acts 2:40 NKJV)** Huh? Be saved from this perverse generation. Hey, I'll tell you what, if you go and stand in the mall and say, "Hey, people of the mall, God has saved me from you perverse people." You'll probably have a couple of bodyguards or security guys standing around you pretty quickly and hauling you out there because you are insulting the people of the mall. Yeah? And if you go and have dinner with friends that were with you at school or with business colleagues, and you have this in your mind, and for some strange reason words come out of your mouth, say, "I'm sitting with perverse people today." They won't even pay for the check. They'll just get up and leave you. Right? But isn't that what

Peter was preaching? ⁴⁰ ... **Be saved from a perverse generation.** Why are the people perverse? It's not because we label a perverse behaviour. It's because they refuse to serve God, they refuse to acknowledge God. ⁴¹ **And those who gladly received His words were baptized, and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.** ⁴² **And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in prayers.** ⁴³ **Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.** ⁴⁴ **Now all who believed were together and had all things in common.** What? They all did things together. They had all things in common. They were believing together. Come on. They were believing together and had all things in common. What did they do next? Next scripture, ⁴⁵ **And sold their possessions and goods and divided them all among all as anyone had need (Acts 2:40-45 NKJV).**

Did this really happen? Did this really happen? Is this just words on a piece of paper? Ah, but Pastor John, we have to analyse this a little bit better because there's people there that didn't have anything, so they had nothing to lose. What about the people that had a lot of stuff and had lots to lose? Well, if you think in terms of winning and losing, yes. Do you think they saw it like that? How do you think they saw it? Did they not do it because the burning passion of the love of God and the zeal of God was burning in their hearts? You think people are going to just part with their possessions? Come on. They didn't have a Visa card to go back to as a backup plan. They didn't have overdrafts in a bank. They didn't say, "We're going to write a quick book and sell us a thousand copies or ten thousand copies to quickly make up my shortfall of income." They couldn't sell ten more cars quickly, Grobbies. Or maybe I can discount the teeth a little bit and just up my turnover. They couldn't do that. I mean, they didn't have a backup plan. They did. This is Ecclesial economics, if you hadn't guessed it by now. This is the called out ones.

So let me just be clear. I'm not telling anybody, just like I said, don't change your system. Let's get where God wants us to go, step by step, day by day. I'm not telling you to sell your houses. Well, let me put it just, if you're going to sell your houses, just give me all the money. Isn't that what you want to hear? That's what everybody else wants to hear out there. Yeah, that pastor, you see, I knew he had a hidden agenda. It's all about him. *Ja, nê.*

⁴³ **Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.** ⁴⁴ **Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common,** ⁴⁵ **and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.** ⁴⁶ **So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart,** ⁴⁷ **praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved. (Acts 2:43-47 NKJV)** Come on, this was not just a Sunday thing. No, this was their very life. This became their very existence.

You know, Jesus said this, "Those that have, that which they have will be taken away from them." Huh? I'm going to talk about that in the next couple of weeks. I'm going to talk about what you have, how you can lose it and what you give away to God, how you will gain everything. Because if you try and hold on to your life so that you can gain it, you're going to lose it. But if you lose your life so that you may gain it, God is going to give you everything you need. Stay with me. I can see now, some people are getting a little bit foggy now because suddenly I talked about all your prized possessions; your beautiful houses and your beautiful cars and, "What's the pastor up to now? Huh? That pastor..." Hey, listen, I can only talk about this because you are tithers, because you are givers. I'm not even addressing tithing. That's just the beginning of how you live for God in a new Kingdom. How are you going to get the whole access to the system of God if you can't tithe? Huh? If you can't tithe and if you can't give offerings and you can't give out of the excess of your substance, how are you going to actually have the Kingdom of God? You won't even get the revelation of it. Why not? Because in your heart, if you're holding on to that money, then that is already your

lord, it's your god, you are serving mammon. Because if you can't let go of tithes, "It's too much money, it's too much money, it's too much money. It's too big a percentage of my income." Heito, heito potato. Did I stand on toes? I don't think so. You guys are already past that stage. *Nê? Ja, nê.*

So now, chapter 4, verse 32, ³² **Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul.** I think we have a very strong sense of one heart and one soul in this church. We are a strongly knitted and bonded community. Praise the Lord for that. **Neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common.** Okay, you guys that have a lot of stuff, I'm in common with you. Please hand over what you've got. I'm really teasing. You know, I've got to have fun with this a little bit because otherwise, you know, I can see. So, let me be clear about this. God has taken care of my needs. I don't need anybody's money. I don't need your houses, I don't need your cars. Hello? This is not about what we need. This is about what you need to do to get to the Kingdom, to get to Ecclesia economics. So, ... **they had all things in common.** ³³ **And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all.** ³⁴ **Nor was there anyone among them who lacked.** Hey, come on. Don't you want everybody that's among you to say where none of us lack? Hey, I want us to be in a place where none of us lack not just because the government is giving social services or the government is giving a pension fund so people are able to live off the government's social services or social grants or pension fund. That's not what happened here. This was the church taking care of itself by the Holy Spirit. ³⁴ **Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold,** ³⁵ **and laid them at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need.** Now we know the story. I'm going to just keep reading. Don't fuss with me now. I've got about 10 minutes left to preach. Don't fuss with me. ³⁶ **And Joses, who was also named Barnabas by the apostles, a Levite of the country of Cyprus,** ³⁷ **having land, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet (Acts 4:32-37 NKJV).**

¹ **But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession.** ² **And he kept back part of the proceeds, his wife also being aware of it, and brought a certain part and laid it at the apostles' feet.** ³ **But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart. Please listen carefully what was said here. ... why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself?"** ⁴ **While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God."** ⁵ **Then Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and breathed his last. So great fear came upon all those who heard these things.** ⁶ **And the young men arose and wrapped him up, carried him out, and buried him.** ⁷ **Now it was about three hours later when his wife came in, not knowing what had happened.** Good relationship they had. Your husband's dead and you don't know it for three hours. Well, I guess the fear of God was all over these people. Nobody wanted to say something that would happen to them, you know. ⁸ **And Peter answered her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for so much?"** She said, "Yes, for so much." ⁹ **Then Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out."** ¹⁰ **Then immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. And the young men came in and found her dead, and carrying her out, buried her by her husband.** ¹¹ **So great fear came upon all the church again and upon all who heard these things (Acts 5:1-11 NKJV).** Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord.

What is happening here is quite a significant thing in the New Testament church. I want you to notice that people were not selling their houses, selling their possessions and coming to place the money at the feet of the disciples because there was a compulsion. No one was

compelled to do this. No one was ordered to do that. No one was making a demand on them to do that. Right? I just want to set the record straight so that you know that the people that I'm connected to, spiritual people, they do not make a demand on people to make an offering. I've never done that. Huh? I don't do things like, "You know what, hey, the Lord has spoken to me today and He has shown me that there are ten people and if ten people will give ten thousand rand each, then those ten people will have a breakthrough of great significance. And also the Lord has told me that there are another twenty people that have a thousand rand and if those twenty people will give a thousand rand, then those people will have this thing happen to them." This is real in many churches. This happens really, really, really. That's the thing that gives the church a bad name.

In the New Testament church, there was no demand, there was no compulsion, there was no pressing people. You must do this, you must do that, you must do that. What happened is there was such a move of God amongst them. They were so united and so together in what this message of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ was doing in them and it was doing around them, and it was doing to them that out of their hearts of the fullness of the Spirit of God that was leading them out of the abundance of what God had placed in their hearts, they said, "What is it that we have this land? What is it that we have that, and our brothers and sisters who have a great need are hungry and can't do anything?" So they made a decision out of their own. "Let me invest all that I have in eternity because I'm investing it in Ecclesia. I'm investing it into the God people."

Compare that to the story where Jesus has a rich young ruler and the rich young ruler has come to Him and Jesus asks him the question, "So what are the commandments of God? Love your mother and your father, honour this, do that, do that. Yes." He says, "All these things I've done all my youth." And Jesus says, "One thing you're missing, sell all your goods, give your money to the poor and come and follow Me." Jesus was giving him a heads up as to what was going to happen to the church. He was giving him a heads up of being a proper disciple for eternity where he could have been named one of the 12. Because right about this time in the book of Acts, in the first chapter, you will find out that what they did was appoint a new apostle to replace Judas. I wonder if Jesus had it in His mind that that young man could become the replacement. Obviously. But he turned around sad because he had many possessions and he had great status and he had great wealth. Now, there's a whole new power of the Holy Spirit that has come upon God's people and through the power of the Holy Spirit, they're saying, "Our money that just is going to be corrupted eventually when we die, what are we going to do with all of this?" Let's invest it into eternity. Let us invest it into the Kingdom of God. Let's invest it into the Church of the Lord Jesus. And then we know that we have eternal salvation." What did Jesus also say to His disciples at that time? Because they asked Him, "How is it possible? We have given up everything to follow You." In other words, the thing that You asked that rich young ruler, we've already done that. So what's our reward? Jesus said to His disciples, "In this, you will inherit eternal life and in this time, this lifetime, you will also have a hundred fold return." Because what He was saying is, "Because you have not considered your future to be about houses, cars, clothes and food. Houses, cars, clothes and food, because you have not made your whole future about houses, cars, clothes and food, houses, cars, clothes and food, because that's not what your whole future is about. Your whole future is about following God. You're going to have eternal life and in this lifetime, you'll have everything taken care of more abundantly than you could ever imagine." So what are they doing in the book of Acts? They're following what Jesus said they need to do. They're saying, "Let's have abundance in eternity and abundance on the earth. Let's make the ultimate investment."

So just so that you know, and then I bring a close to my message today and I bring a close to this part of what we had to do this weekend. They were together in one accord. They were united. They were believing, it was all in their hearts. If that's not in your heart, I'm not making any pressure on you to do anything. Do we understand each other? But if I don't

preach revelation truth to you, then we'll never have anything that we can pray about, that we can press to God for. It doesn't matter to me if it takes a year, two years, five years, ten years, everybody's going to have their own walk with God and their own time with God and they're going to have their own things with God but if I don't preach it by the Holy Spirit, then we'll never have something to aim for and then we'll always be stuck in a system and we'll never know that there's a whole new way that God can do things. Hallelujah. Praise the Lord. Praise Jesus. Glory to God.

I've always had this measure and I continue to have this measure. I live amongst you. I live with you. You live with me, and when I wake up in the morning and I walk and I see anybody, I see you on a bicycle, I see you in the mall, I see you at the garage, I see you in a coffee shop, whatever, I must be able to look you in the eyes and know the integrity of my heart that I've preached the truth to you and only the truth to you. And I'm not trying to manipulate you, convince you, deceive you, do anything with you because it's a personal agenda. Because I know for myself, if I ever had anybody preach to me like that, then I would be pretty darn mad. Right?

So why am I having to talk like this with you today? Because I know how people get bent out of shape when you talk about money. Especially when you're touching houses and cars and clothes and food. Houses and cars and clothes and food. "But you don't... Pastor John, what else are we going to do?" Serve God. Not make your whole life about chasing houses and cars and clothes and food. "But, you know, don't you throw career in that?" Well, what is a career for? Houses and cars and clothes and food. "Well, you know, I think my life is worth more meaning than that." Really? Okay, let's see how much more your life is worth. Sell your houses and cars and clothes and food and then tell me what the rest is left of the meaning of your life. If you say, "What I'm doing is more purposeful and more meaningful." Okay, sell your houses and cars and clothes, and let's see what's left of your meaning. "Oh no, but my meaning is in the fact that I have a status in the community." Oh, so God needs your status to make a difference? No, He took a fisherman. He took a fisherman and said, "Fisherman, go preach." This fisherman, he's so unworthy. Hey, this guy, he doubted everything about God, then he betrayed Him, he cut some guy's ear off, thinking that he's going to do a whole lot of stuff, Jesus had to cast the devil out of him because the devil was using him. Huh? That guy, that's how much status you need to be used by Jesus. He doesn't need a talented person. He doesn't need a hyper-status person. He doesn't need a whole lot of wealth to be used by God. I'm shooting lots of holy cows here today. Praise the Lord. Praise Jesus. Praise Jesus. Praise Jesus. Praise Jesus. Praise Jesus. Hey, if we're not going to be serious about living for God completely, then who's going to be? If not us, then who? *[Pastor Sharon says; if not now, then when?]* If not now, then when, baby? Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Glory to Jesus. Glory to Jesus.

So just notice, hey, just notice that I have not taken up an offering this weekend. Neither am I taking up offering this morning because this would be a great message to take up an offering. Let's send out envelopes. Which of you are giving your houses? Which one of you are giving your cars? Which one of you are giving your clothes? Hallelujah. Praise Jesus. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord.

So Pastor John, have you done all this stuff? I have. I've given up houses and homes. I've given up status. I've given up to follow Jesus. I'm not preaching to you something that I haven't done many times in some cases, but I've given my life to follow God. And hey, it's going to take all of us to give our lives to follow God if we're going to walk in this revelation. Amen. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. So I feel like I've got to just make sure that this message is not received in the wrong way. You know, I just have to make sure. I'm not asking you to sell your houses. I'm not asking you to sell your car. I'm not asking you to do anything. I'm just preaching the truth to you. I'm preaching the Word to you and I'm

allowing the Holy Spirit to come and touch you and reveal things to you and set a standard in your heart. And in time, you will begin to think about the world system differently. You'll begin to have the revelation of God in your heart, and as that revelation grows, these things will become more powerful to you. Amen.

And so, I have more to say to you about how to get out of the system and how to be in the system. Oh, by the way, how many of you would like us to move Message Moments to about an hour from now because I'm closing the service rather than make it at one o'clock so that we can have Message Moments and we can, Pastor Sharon and I will dovetail in that meeting and we're going to share some stuff. And we'll get Message Moments done quick. Is it enough time for you to grab a quick bite to eat, to have tea and coffee and then come back if you want to come back and hear more about Ecclesia? More about Kingdom economics. Hallelujah. Stand with me, please.

Hey, you know what, hey, Paul the Apostle, he preached day and then he preached night and then about midnight a young guy like Tom and Jon, those young guys, they were sitting in the window sill and they got sleepy. Not you, Jon, hey? [*Pastor John laughs*] They got sleepy. "Ah, this preacher is preaching a bit long." He falls out the window, dies, Paul goes out and says, "Hey! Wake up, you!" He raises him from the dead, "Let's preach some more!" [*Pastor John laughs*] Hey, if I've got people that are falling dead in the service then maybe we've got to think about how long I've been preaching. Otherwise, we've got a little bit of grace here, right? Just a little bit of grace, we got a little bit of grace here. Praise the Lord.

I want you to just put your hand on your heart and just say; thank You, Lord, for the Gospel that's being preached to me, the Good News of the Lord Jesus Christ. I receive it. My heart is ready to grow it. I receive full revelation of it. In Jesus' name. I live my life with wisdom, I live my life with understanding and I will follow You all the days of my life, in Jesus' name. Amen. You are the sons of God. You are God's trophy. You are the reason why I can preach a message like this today because He says you're good with it, you can handle it. You are His people. Hallelujah. You are His people. Amen.

Well, those of you that are kind of... ugh, I don't know why you don't want to stay for Message Moments, but okay, if you have to go you have to go. I understand you have to go. But you can stay too. Pastor Sharon says you *can* stay. But if you have to go, be blessed in the name of Jesus. And if I don't get a chance to pray this for you after the Message Moments, be blessed. You're blessed going out, you're blessed coming in. No weapon formed against you will prosper. Do you agree with that? The Word of God and the blood of Jesus surrounds you, surrounds your family, surrounds your income, surrounds your business, surrounds your health - you are protected by the Word and the blood of Jesus. No evil will come near you. No weapon formed against you will prosper. He will guide you and lead you so that you don't even dash your foot against a hidden rock or a stone, in Jesus' name. Thank You, Lord, that we are blessed going out and Your peace is upon us. And you all say? Amen. Thank you for coming to church. See ya later.