

13 October 2024 Ultimate Impact, Limitless Imagination Part 5
Pastor John Bendixen (WTB)

Scripture reference: Genesis 14:19-20 NLT, Galatians 3:8-9 NLT, Hebrews 7:6-8 NLT, Hebrews 7:8-10 NLT, Malachi 3:1-3 NLT, Malachi 3:3-4 NLT, Malachi 3:6-8 NLT, Malachi 3:9-16 NLT, Malachi 3:16 NLT, Hebrews 1:10 NKJV

Pastor Sharon:

You are our God this morning, Who is going to speak through Pastor John to us. You are our God that is ready to bring Your message through this precious messenger this morning, we are so ready, Father. Your Word says, today if you will hear Your voice, harden not your heart, as our fathers did in the wilderness. No, Father, today we hear Your voice and we do not harden our hearts. We are ready to receive and ready to believe. We are ready. We thank You for Your anointing, precious presence within Pastor John, upon him and he will speak what he hears You say, Father. We thank You for this powerful impartation that comes to pass now. In Jesus' name and we all say, amen. Thank you, Pastor John.

Pastor John:

Praise the Lord. Glory to Jesus. I've said this many times, I will say it as many times as I need to in my life. I'm glad that the God that we serve is alive, not only is He alive because we think so; He's alive because He lives in us. That's a big thing, He lives in us. No one or anything on the earth can separate Him, from Him being in us. That's a grand thing. That is a glorious thing. You know, it's the thing that makes all the difference in our lives, isn't it? Yes, amen.

You know, you all look pretty good today, yeah, you look good, eh? Thank you. Thank you. Before you get seated, just tell someone else they look pretty good. Then you may be seated. Thank you, and if you're a little uncertain about how to say it, say it's because the pastor said it. Hallelujah.

Well, I have to tell you that many, many years ago, I want to say as many years ten years ago, maybe longer, probably fifteen years ago now. I had a moment with the Lord and I knew, I knew that this year, I don't know it will be a year like this year. But I knew that this time would come, and I am not surprised but I am in wonderment and awe of how God works.

About fifteen years ago I knew the time would come when some of the generals of the faith and some of the people that Sharon and I have been connected to would no longer be on the earth, they would go home to be with God. Then that would leave us here, you know?

I wouldn't have been able to say that it would be the year like it has turned out to be this year. But, you know, Brother Jerry went home in April, and Pastor Ray went home to be with the Lord this week. If you had said to me that they both are going to go home in the same year within months of each other, I mean, that would have surprised me somewhat, you know. But, certainly, for me the people that have had meaningful impact in my life and I've walked a long time with have both gone home to be with the Lord.

Can you bring that slide up for me please? [*Ps John referring to an image of Brother Jerry, Pastor Ray and Pastor John together*] I know you've seen the slide before but in 2018 Brother Jerry and myself and Pastor Ray. I was a bit taller than them so I had to try and fit myself in the picture there, you know. But it was a wonderful moment that we all had together. You can leave it up there for a moment. I'm just going to talk about, if you don't mind, I will talk a little bit about my life with Pastor Ray and give God glory for what he did in my life. I am going to use that somewhat to talk about what God is doing amongst us.

When I was introduced to Rhema, there was so much about Rhema that was so unusual to me. Because I have come from the Assemblies of God Church where they had what was called the 'open ministry time' on Sunday mornings, and people could get up and other people could preach. I mean, the people who did what we call 'praise and worship then,' they were not really in the forefront of the church, you know. Music was just a service to the, sort of preamble to, before the ministry, Word was spoken. Certainly in my part of the Assemblies of God anyway.

When I came to Rhema it was like, there was this professional, highly professional music group that was on the stage. The Sunday services were run like clockwork. You know, when I went there, I think the first time I went there, there was one service and it would be at 10 o'clock in the morning and it was done by 11:30, no longer; normally 11:20. It was run like clockwork. That was a surprise to me because the Assemblies of God church was very different to that.

There were a lot of things that surprised me. Ushers were not something we had in the Assemblies of God or the AFM churches or anybody else, you had deacons. Even the NG kerk had *diakens*, you know. And then you had the *ouderlinge* and *diakens*, they would come and they would make sure everything worked on a Sunday, but *die ouderlinge* would *klop* on your door in the week and say, "*Waar's jou tiende, broer?*" Right?

So, you know, I mean, in historical churches, there were elders and there were deacons and then there was the church, *die kerkraad*, and *passop vir die kerkraad jong*, you know. I certainly grew up in the Assemblies of God version of that. When I arrived at Rhema, there were ushers and there were door greeters and there were all kinds of things that were going on there that I wasn't; it was unusual to me. Everything was done at a level of coordination.

At first, it was quite intimidating, to the point where the first service that Pastor Sharon attended with me, she walked out of there and she said, I mean, there were maybe 3,000 people in that service that day, and she walked out and said, "I can never go back to that church. It's too big. It's too formal. It's too orchestrated. It's too everything. I'm never going back there." But in my heart, I knew that's where God called me. I never said a word until God dealt with her and since then, she's been trying to catch up with me all this time.

But certainly, there were many, many things that were in my face that were very unusual to me. If I had gone in there with not knowing that God had called me there, the chances are that I would have allowed the way of church to actually prevent me from getting to know the God that was in the church. Certainly, the God that was in the church, the God of the messages that were preached changed my life because I was introduced into, and I was given a key of how to live in faith and how to live with God. I had that strong doctrinal background, but there was something missing. Even though you've heard me tell the story, when I was in the military, I'd read the Bible and I would pray every day, and I walked with God and God walked with me, there was still a level of power that I didn't have.

When I learned what you will now know as the *Sower Sows the Word*, your words have the power of life and death in them. When I started to learn things like that, I learned how to live my walk with God. Of course that affects a lot of things. It was very amazing to me.

You know, the first three years when I was at Rhema, things that had happened in the church were very distant to me because God told me there to sit and learn, and learn I did. Then, when God eventually started to release me into serving in the church, you know, I obviously became more integrated. I got to know wonderful men like Pastor Lynn and Brother Joe Peters and people you won't even know. Many, many people in the church that are, some of them have already also gone home to be with the Lord and many of some of them may be at the funeral, or whatever they're going to call it.

But, you know, I have to thank God for this, that Pastor Ray obeyed God, and he came back to South Africa with a message of faith. Yeah. So, I'd like to tell you something that many people don't know, because after this week I may not ever, I may or may not talk about it again, let's see how things go. But, you know, Kenneth Hagen Junior came to South Africa. He came to South Africa under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to come and look for people that would want to attend Rhema Bible School in Tulsa. He came under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. He found a couple here by the name of Ray and Lindy McCauley. They didn't have the means to go to America and live in America and go to Bible School in America.

He ended up saying to them that he would pay their tuition fees and bursar them and help them get to America for the first year of Bible School. That's how they got introduced to the faith message and to Kenneth Hagen. When they came back to South Africa, they came under the leadership of Kenneth Hagen Senior and they came to start Rhema Bible Church and Rhema Bible Training Center under the leadership of Kenneth Hagen, which is how I got introduced to Kenneth E. Hagen and all of the wonderful faith stuff that we were taught under Kenneth E. Hagen. Marvelous thing.

I want to tell you a story about how God gave Brother Ray, Pastor Ray, gave him the means to start the church. When he was in America, someone gave them a gift. It turned out the gift was a six-carat diamond. A six-carat diamond is worth a lot of money. So, they thought, "Well, this is the thing that is going to start our ministry. We are going to be able to sell the diamond and take the money and start the ministry with the money."

That did not happen. They felt led of the Lord to sow the diamond. They sowed the diamond and came back without money. But how many of you know, that didn't last very long, because then money just flowed into their life. So the day he died, Pastor Ray and Rhema was always well-supplied. Well, because that is how he lived. It is one of the things that he really did a lot of, he was really a giver to the poor and he had a lot of compassion on the poor, and he was someone that really wanted to see that everybody got saved.

You know, I heard Joshua McCauley speak about this during the week. I heard his son say, probably one of the greatest altar call givers on the planet Earth was Pastor Ray. I watched him say almost nothing. He could say, "Baa, Baa, black sheep, who wants to get saved?" I mean this sincerely. He could say, "Baa, Baa, black sheep, anyone who wants to get saved?" 300 people would come to the front. Really, I mean, he hardly, if he would read a scripture and then give an altar call, people just got saved. They just got saved. It was an amazing thing that God anointed him to be able to do something like that. It is quite remarkable.

I suppose one of the things that really, I live with, is that I am grateful that Pastor Ray had a hand in changing the political climate of this nation at a critical moment. When Nelson Mandela was released from prison and a new mandate was given to South Africa to be an all-inclusive government, and all-inclusive people, Pastor Ray was very, very, very involved in that, and God used him to say significant things at significant times.

Some of that anointing that was on him to be part of our nation's healing, was quite controversial, because he had people like Nelson Mandela in the church on the pulpit. He had old apartheid ministers, the minister of police, and he had F.W. de Klerk and many different politicians came to Rhema, and they would come and stand in the pulpit, and declared whatever it is they wanted to speak about on that particular time. Of course, having politicians in the pulpit like that certainly caused a lot of controversy.

From time to time, people would ask me about that, and they would say, "We can't accept the fact that someone with Pastor Ray's standing and status would allow politicians to use

his platform.” My answer to the people who would question me about that would always be this. “Do you have his calling, and do you have his anointing? Because if you don't have his calling and you don't have his anointing, then you could not understand what his calling and his anointing will do. If you can't understand what it will do, then you have no right to speak against it, because from where you sit, you can make any opinion about what's right and wrong and you like because it's your right to make it, but you don't walk in his anointing and his calling and so you have no right to speak against it.”

I recall one day, somebody making that comment to me, and I answered them this way. They got quite angry with me, and they were quite steadfast in saying, “This still is not right, this still isn't right.” I just said, “It only matters what God thinks about this. It really doesn't matter what men think about this.” If God uses a man and that anointing is on him, whether he uses this correctly or incorrectly, it doesn't matter, there's an anointing on him, and his calling is working. His gifting and his calling is working and you can't speak against that. Why would we want to?

If God was using him to be part of politics in the nation and be a facilitator for healing and for peace, then how do we know what that looks like? If you had the answer for that, then God would have called you to that. So go step into that role, then you can talk.

That was one of the reasons how God called me to be around Pastor Ray and I could look at his humanity and not be impacted by his humanity. It was primarily on this matter. A lot of people had a lot to say and there were a lot of young men that ended up causing quite a lot of chaos in the church, I might add. Anyway, I'm not going to say much about it, but these young men had a lot to say about Pastor Ray's calling. They had a lot to say about the way he was running and conducting church services, or rather how he was not conducting church services. There was a group of five of them, and they were very vocal and very zealous in their belief in what God had called them to and they came to speak to me about it. I said the following to them, and God had placed this vision in my heart, and he had placed this wisdom in my heart.

He had said to me sometime before, He had said, “John, you have no right to express a view about the way Pastor Ray runs the church until you serve Pastor Ray, and God puts you in a place,” God talking to me, puts me in a place that I have now served him to the point where he has promoted me to be able to walk with him to solve the problems that he faces. And only if I've been diligent to serve him so that God promotes me to be in his space, to help him solve the problems that he faces, then, and only then, will I be in a position where I can say something about his ministry.

What do you think that did to me? That protected me because everybody, all these young guys had lots to say and I told them what I've just told you and I said, “If your anointing is so strong and you have such strong opinions about Pastor Ray, why don't you serve him and help see what problems he faces in running such a big ministry. Then if you become a solution to his problems, then you may earn the right to speak into his life and have anything to say about the problems that he solves. Until then, don't cause division, don't have things to say, don't have all these comments and opinions about how you think things should be done.”

That's the easiest thing in the world to do. It's like sitting on your couch and talking about a Springbok player that missed the kick. “How did this guy miss the kick? He had all the time in the world, time to think, time to plan. He's got to kick them all over the post.” Ja, sitting on the couch, good on you, boy. You haven't put the training in, you haven't done all the hours and hours and hours and hours, and you haven't had to deal with the pressure. Until you have, you've got nothing to say about the fact that he missed the kick. Right?

Well, it's the same about Pastor Ray. Not any of us, even now, would understand his calling, his gifting and the time that he walked on the earth, what God wanted to use him for. Amazing. For me, I have to say I'm privileged and I'm honoured and I'm thankful to God that he called me to Rhema when he did and I had the opportunity to walk close with Pastor Ray. Not only did I have that opportunity, but I had this immeasurable blessing that because he went to Rhema and he got connected to Jerry Savelle and he got connected to Kenneth Copeland and he got connected to Kenneth Hagin, I was privileged to meet all those people and receive from all of those gifts and callings, because Pastor Ray made it happen. God used him to make it happen in South Africa.

The fact that I have walked all these years with Brother Jerry, it's because Pastor Ray had a relationship with him. You may never hear this, but Kenneth Copeland started a ministry in South Africa and there was someone who was running the ministry and he actually defrauded the ministry, and things were not managed well, let's put it politely. Things were not managed well, so Kenneth Copeland asked Brother Ray, Pastor Ray, if he could bring Kenneth Copeland Ministries into the Rhema building and run it from the Rhema building for a period of time until someone else could be raised up that could run Kenneth Copeland Ministries. Hello.

Do you understand how far back this goes? Long time. Long time. Then eventually someone was raised up. Things were quite sticky for a number of years until there was a proper leadership that was put in there. I can tell you that it wasn't long after that leadership got put into Kenneth Copeland Ministries that Pastor Sharon and I were privileged to walk alongside those leaders in their development of Kenneth Copeland Ministries, South Africa. That's got to be 35 years ago.

I just want to say thank you for letting me speak this morning because I wanted to honour Pastor Ray and of course, by that, I'm honouring Brother Jerry again, but I wanted to honour Pastor Ray for what he did for me, what he did for us and indirectly where we are partly today is because of him because I don't know where I would have been without the faith message in my life. You know, even though in this picture here his physical body was deteriorating quite dramatically in the last 10 years or so, you know, even though that happened, he was a very big man. He was a big man, he had a big vision, he had a big dream and he had a big calling. God used him to fundamentally change the direction of many, many things that the church needed to change in our country for sure. Hallelujah.

Why don't you praise the Lord and say thank You Lord for giving us this gift. Thank You, Lord, for giving us the gift of Pastor Ray. We appreciate You, Father, for bringing him into the earth and allowing him to affect our world in Jesus' name. In Jesus' name. Hallelujah. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord.

You know, Pastor Ray. Finally, I'll just say this, Pastor Ray made it available to me from time to time. He made it available to me that he would come and minister here for us if I asked him to, because some of you may wonder that. But, the way just things happened in his personal life created space between us. So, even though we had a good personal relationship from a ministry point of view, that was challenging. God, in any case, put me with Brother Jerry and that was primarily where I wanted and where we needed to have our affection. Amen. Praise the Lord.

Isn't it amazing that last year the Lord said, "Crossover, crossover." Isn't it amazing that we started that last year and then as we finished and we said, "Reset," Brother Jerry went home to be with the Lord. And months later, Pastor Ray went home to be with the Lord. And we are ready to run. This is not a coincidence. This is all in the timing of God. Amen. Thank you for letting me share that with you this morning. Amen.

I have been talking about covenant over the last couple of weeks. I'm going to talk to you today about one of the greatest covenants. It's not often preached in this context. But in order for me to get to it properly, I need to just read to you the passage of Scripture that we read last week, where Melchizedek blesses Abram.

¹⁸ And Melchizedek, the king of Salem and a priest... So, this is Genesis chapter 14 verse 18, **¹⁸ And Melchizedek, the king of Salem and a priest of God Most High, brought Abram some bread and wine. ¹⁹ Melchizedek blessed Abram with this blessing: "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. ²⁰ And blessed be God Most High, who has defeated your enemies for you." Then Abram gave Melchizedek a tenth of all the goods he had recovered. (Genesis 14:18-20 NLT)**

I want you to see that God used Melchizedek in whatever form you believe Melchizedek was or is eternally. He was used to speak words over Abram. **"Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. ²⁰ And blessed be God Most High, who has defeated your enemies for you." (Genesis 14:19-20 NLT)**

Isn't it amazing that the first thing that Abram does is to give him a tithe? Hey? Now, I'd like to just make a point here. If you go and trade, you're in business, and you are up against ten different competitors who are after the same business that you are after. Can I suggest to you that actually, you're in an economic battle? Right? I mean, if the deal was just like, of course, I'm going to get the deal, then there's no battle. The struggle is there's nine other people contending for the business. There's a pricing war, there's a product war, there's a sales plan that's got to be put into action. So there's a battle. Right? If you get the business and the business is yours, and you make the profit, is that profit done because you were in economic war, but you won the battle? I mean, you could call it that, couldn't you?

If Abram went to war against kings because they went and took people and goods, and they were saying, hey, we won this battle. We've made all the profit. We've won all the territory for ourselves. Abram says, "Huh, no you don't. You're not going to come and dominate on your terms. I'm coming after you. So you didn't take it legally. I'm taking it back." So when Abram takes it back, you could say that he won the economic war. Right?

I mean, the fact that he did battle and won the goods and the people back, it's the same as if you're doing business every day. You've got to win business. Right? So, when Abram gave a tenth, when Abram gave a tenth to Melchizedek, who did the goods belong to? If he wanted to own the goods, he could. Read the story. Abram said, "I don't want to take the goods for myself. You keep the goods. Just the stuff that my warriors have used while they did the battle, the food they've eaten. Otherwise, I was more interested in deliverance, righteousness, justice than I was in winning goods." So when Abram gave a tenth to Melchizedek, that was not spoils of war that didn't cost him anything. Hello. Are you all with me?

What happened was that he legitimately went after an enemy that wanted to defeat him. He defeated the enemy, and then all the stuff that he got, that was his, he gave a tenth to Melchizedek. Was there a law there about the tithe? Why did he give a tithe? Why did Melchizedek have bread and wine with Abram? Remember, at this point, Abram was not yet Abraham. He was still Abram, but he was in that territory by God's order. He was in that territory by covenant. Come on. He was in that territory by covenant, so when someone came after the people that he knew that he was in relationship with, he said, "This is an injustice, and my strength - I'm going to bring all my strength right now." So when he gave a tenth, he was doing it because of covenant, not because of law, not because of illegitimate spoils, but because of covenant; because of relationship.

When Melchizedek and Abram enter into this activity, Abram is giving him a tenth, and Melchizedek breaks bread and wine, has a bread and wine moment with him. Now we know, years later, that this was going to signify the death of Jesus, the breaking of His body, the shedding of His blood, and even now, the book of Corinthians says to us that we should participate in the Lord's table and remember His death until He comes. So we do that by eating the bread and drinking the wine as a representation of His body and His blood.

Now right at this moment of great victory, Melchizedek, who is after the order of the priests. Yes? He's coming to break bread with Abram. Covenant. What does Abraham give him in the covenant? Tithe. If anybody had any doubt about whether tithing is about law or no law, just got to find out where it's being revealed from, from our Father of Faith. Come on.

The very first time we ever get to hear about an offering given to God was Cain and Abel, and that turned out to be a bloody war. Truly, it was a bloody war because of an offering that was given to God. One offering was accepted by God and the other one was not. The next time we see a significant offering is a tithe, and it's after a bloody war.

If you think that the enemy of God is not going to contest your offering and what you've got to give to God, you are mistaken. It's the reason why the message of the tithe is so challenged and so spoken against everywhere.

We look again to Galatians chapter 3, verse 8. **⁸ What's more, the Scriptures looked forward to this time when God would make the Gentiles right in his sight because of their faith. God proclaimed this good news to Abraham long ago when he said, "All nations will be blessed through you." ⁹ So all who put their faith in Christ share the same blessing Abraham received because of his faith (Galatians 3:8-9 NLT).** Okay.

Now, if we go back to Hebrews, and we read from Hebrews chapter 7, and we read verse 6, **⁶ But Melchizedek, who was not a descendant of Levi, collected a tenth from Abraham. And Melchizedek placed a blessing upon Abraham, the one who had already received the promises of God.** Can you see the one who had already received the promises of God? That established the covenant.

If I can read this to you in a different way, I would read it to you this way. **⁶ But Melchizedek, who was not a descendant of Levi, collected a tenth from Abraham** because of covenant. **And Melchizedek placed a covenant blessing upon Abraham,** because of covenant. The one who had received a covenant promise of God received this blessing from Melchizedek because of covenant. Right?

⁷ And without question, the person who has the power to give a blessing is greater than the one who is blessed. So it's quite clear that even though there was covenant established with Abraham because Melchizedek was giving a blessing to Abraham, his status in eternity with God must have been a representation of God to be able to bless Abraham. That's what the scripture says.

Morning, church. Hello. So, watch this now. **⁸ The priests who collect tithes are men who die, so Melchizedek is greater than they are because we are told that he lives on. ⁹ In addition, we might even say that these Levites—the ones who collect the tithe—paid a tithe to Melchizedek when their ancestor Abraham paid a tithe to him. ¹⁰ For although Levi wasn't born yet, the seed from which he came was in Abraham's body when Melchizedek collected the tithe from him. (Hebrews 7:8-10 NLT)**

I want to see how God is such a generational, eternal God, He is making the case here, that even though Levi was not yet born and Levi was not yet going to be part of the priesthood

that would stand between God and man in the earth at that time because Abraham was going to be the father that would bring Moses and all of Egypt, all of Israel into the world. That because he gave tithes, one could say that Levi was already paying tithes through Abraham who gave tithes to Melchizedek. Even though he was not yet born, he was giving tithes because he was going to come from Abraham. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

If I had to say something about that, I would say it to you this way. That every time I stand in this pulpit and I preach faith and I preach what I've learned from Pastor Ray and from Brother Jerry, one could say all of the messages that I'm preaching, I already would have preached them a long time ago because I received it from them.

All the people they'd preached to, I was already part of preaching to them because I would preach later. And everything that I'm still preaching, they're still preaching through me. Everything that they want to leave by God's revelation on the earth, you are it. So your seed is speaking and has spoken before you were born because it came through the message that they sent. Wow.

If we think that God's just a haphazard God, you know, we need to think again because everything God does is purposeful. Everything that God does has eternal value and He does it because it's to the glory of the Most High. Hallelujah.

Isn't it amazing that, if I can put it to you this way, isn't it amazing that if you come and give your tithes, here on earth I receive tithes. But the Bible says, I'm not going to read all of that this morning, that even though we receive tithes here on earth, He receives them in heaven. One could say that when you give me tithes, you were giving tithes to God through Abraham because we give tithes through Levi, we give tithes through Jesus, we give tithes through me, so you're giving tithes to the Father, through all the men that came before. And people want to say, "Tithing is like... that's such a big deal?" Huh? Wow.

I'll tell you why I'm talking about tithing today. I'm talking about tithing because tithing is a covenant connector. I'm trying to reveal to you that tithing is a covenant, it's a covenant deal. It's not a thing that you have to give money to me or to the church or to anything that's going on. Tithing is your covenant connector. It's showing God that you recognise that He's covenanted with you in all matters of your life.

Of course, I have to go to Malachi and I have to read to you from Malachi chapter three, verse one from the New Living Translation. ¹ **"Look! I am sending my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. Then the Lord you are seeking will suddenly come to his Temple. The messenger of the covenant, whom you look for so eagerly, is surely coming,"** says the Lord of Heaven's Armies. ² **"But who will be able to endure it when he comes? Who will be able to stand and face him when he appears? For he will be like a blazing fire that refines metal, or like a strong soap that bleaches clothes.** ³ **He will sit like a refiner of silver, burning away the dross. He will purify the Levites, refining them like gold and silver, so that they may once again offer acceptable sacrifices to the Lord. (Malachi 3:1-3 NLT)**

I want you just to notice one thing; He says He will purify the Levites. The New Testament fivefold ministry is a New Testament model of the Levites. If you think God will just allow people to preach in the pulpit and just be authoritarian and have them just do whatever they want to do and be whatever they want to be and not purify them and not correct them, He's telling you here that He will do it. He will do it. That's why I've always preached this and I said, "Don't wish yourself into a position of fivefold ministry. Don't wish yourself into it. Let God call you into it because He would have to grace you to it because you need the grace to stand here."

Preaching in the pulpit is an easy thing to do from a communication point of view. You might as well be doing a presentation to hundreds of people on a Sunday morning. Anybody can do a presentation. You know, you can go on YouTube and go to TED Talks and watch anybody do a presentation. You can watch any kind of corporate event that happens. People do presentations. Communication, you can do communication.

Communication is not what this is all about. What this is all about, it's about a calling, it's about a gifting and it's about God's calling and gifting and anointing. If you stand in a pulpit trying to teach people about God that you're not called to do, it will burn you. It is the reason why there are many, many, many, many, many preachers that go into the ministry and quit the ministry because they haven't got the capacity and the capability, the calling, the anointing. They're not called to the fivefold ministry.

For many, many years, the church presented the pulpit and the fivefold ministry as the highest form of life that anybody could live. I never believed that. I have never believed that. In fact, you would have heard me say, the greatest being that you can be on the earth is what? A disciple. A disciple is the greatest form of Christian that you can be.

I mean, yes, there is a place for fivefold ministry, but God is going to refine and purify His ministers, His messengers, those that are Levites that stand before God because whatever I teach you, the Lord says I'm doubly responsible for everything that I teach you. He's the one that holds me to account. So if I think I'm anything special, best I start serving you. Because isn't that what Jesus did when He came? Yeah. He said, "I came here to glorify the Father, not to glorify Myself. And the way I glorify the Father is to serve you."

So let me just explain this to you. If I'm exercising spiritual authority, who am I accountable to? I'm accountable to God.

I'm going to use Luke and Ester as an example. Can I use you as an example, Luke? I mean, when Luke and Ester started to recognise that this is their future, I stood between Luke and Ester, my office, with Pastor Christi, my office stood between Luke and Ester and said, "We're going to walk with you to make sure that your coming together is under the protection of the House and the anointing of God."

Now just watch this. In the world that we are around today, when someone starts to fancy someone else, what's the first thing they want to do? Kiss. Hold hands, kiss, get intimate. So what is my responsibility to do? "Luke, if you and Ester unlock that door and that fire burns before the time, you're going to destroy yourself."

The world out there says that's not destruction, that's the way it's supposed to be, that's the new culture, that's the new social order, that's the way people get to know each other. Right? I'm leading them the way God wants them to be. The order of God is higher than the order of men. You have to choose, they had to choose the order of God rather than the order of men. They chose God. I could not choose God for them. If they went behind - thank God they didn't that's why I'm using them today. If they went behind my back and started kissing and fiddling around and doing stuff, what have I got to say about that? It's their life, it's their choices, it's their business. But they chose to recognise that I stand for the order of God. Come on. Now, watch what happens.

Someone sitting from the outside looking at the way that I worked with them, not just me, I'm talking about my office. How we worked with them, we encouraged them, we invited them to build a solid, strong friendship; build it in the Word, build it in God, build it with a solid foundation. They grew in ways that takes most people that get married, it takes them 10 years to build what they built before they got married. Because they didn't have the rubbish of every time we get together, we've got to get passionate.

I'm really preaching good here. So, they didn't have to worry about all the sexual stuff all the time. They had to just, "Let's build a friendship, let's build in God, let's get to know each other, let's build a foundation that is strong." But watch what happens. Somebody who doesn't understand what's going on here that wants to do it the world's way, what do they say about me? "You're too authoritarian. You are too strict. You have too much to say in their relationship that they obviously know about each other. You're too, you're too, you're too. That's not the way it's done, it's not done, it's not done. We want to, we want to, we want. We think you shouldn't, you shouldn't, you shouldn't." Right? Because they don't understand the order of God, but they could have a lot to say about what they perceive to be my authority.

I have no authority. I had no authority in Luke's life or Ester's life except what they gave me. They wanted to have God in their lives, so they said, "We will receive your counsel."

So, you know, they are the first of many that are going to be like that. I thank God that actually what He's raising, He is raising up a people here, that when they are actually married and they start to live together as husband and wife, they come with God's anointing in their relationship. I know that the first year they're going to learn lots about each other. Some people will say, "Yeah, but if you learned that before you got married, then you wouldn't have to learn..." No, if you learn it that way, you're doing it the devil's way. You're doing it the world's way. God's anointing is not on that way. So you bring all kinds of baggage into your future. They don't have that baggage. Hey, come on.

Now let me tell you what I'm talking about and how I got from tithing to that. Because God's a covenant God and it doesn't matter what the world says about tithing, whether it's because of churches or it's because the pastors need to get paid or because it's just about a status thing, a power thing or whatever thing. People have got a lot of opinions to say about tithes and about giving to the church and how it's abused and how it's misused and how it's an Old Testament thing. It's not a New Testament thing. It's all this kind. They got a lot of stuff to say. The only reason they are going to say that is because they have made a choice in themselves they don't want to tithe. So they will find all kinds of reasons to speak against the tithe.

The thing is, what happened with Luke and Ester is they made a covenant between themselves and they made a covenant before God that this is the way they're going to do the order of their lives. When you make a covenant before God about your finances that you say, "I see there's a covenant principle. I see there's a covenant of God's order and I'm making a decision to be in covenant with God that I'm going to put Him in my money by giving Him my tithe." You are recognising His authority. You're recognising His Lordship. You're recognising His power and authority and you might not see all of the results immediately. Just like Luke and Ester had to wait till they got married before they consummated their union. And if you're in the world you'd say, "But that's old school, old fashioned nonsense." Which young people want to do that anymore? There are some. Thank you, Luke. I don't know where Ester is, but wherever she is, she's probably in the back there, but thank you, Ester. Hallelujah.

Because I'll tell you, God is, you know, I mean, there's not going to be an immediate thing of, look how different their lives are. Because people get married, they live together, they go about their lives and you don't see much of what happens behind closed doors. That's what happens with all marriages. But what's happened is they've unlocked an anointing and they've unlocked the wisdom of God that they don't even yet know the fullness of what's coming to them by God. But the wisdom and the anointing of God and the love of God is all over them.

They might be about themselves on their day and they're dealing with each other. "But you said." "But I said, no, no." "But you said." "But no, but I feel like this and you feel like that." There's natural stuff they're going to learn, but the anointing of God to deal with those things is on them. When you've not gone God's way, you're trying to find God's anointing, but you got all this baggage that you got to get through to try and find what's God saying. Huh? Looks like I've got everybody's attention now. I should talk more about this kind of stuff then the people won't fall asleep in church on a Sunday. Hallelujah.

So, that's why if I've come to you today and I'm talking to you about tithes. Check at that, my timing. This is about covenant. Verse 3 says, ³ **He will sit like a refiner of silver, burning away the dross. He will purify the Levites, refining them like gold and silver, so that they may once again offer acceptable sacrifice to the Lord.** ⁴ **Then once more, the Lord will accept the offerings brought to Him by the people of Judah and Jerusalem, as He did in the past (Malachi 3:3-4 NLT).**

Now I'm going to read to you a passage of scriptures, that are very often quoted. ⁶ **I am the Lord.** By the way, I put my alarm on half an hour today because I want to finish early. So you see my alarm that was flashing here, it was only on half an hour. So don't look at me like that. I'm in a different time zone here.

⁶ **"I am the Lord, and I do not change. That is why you descendants of Jacob are not already destroyed."** I am the Lord and I do not change. That means what He was doing through Melchizedek, giving Him bread and wine and what He was receiving from Abraham. He hasn't changed from then till now. ⁷ **"Ever since the days of your ancestors, you have scorned My decrees and failed to obey them. Now return to Me and I will return to you,"** says the Lord of Heaven's Armies. **"But you ask, 'How can we return when we have never gone away?' Should people cheat God? Yet you have cheated Me. But you ask, 'What do you mean? When did we ever cheat You?'"**

⁸ **"You have cheated Me of the tithes and offerings due to Me. You are under a curse."** (Malachi 3:6-8 NLT) Remember what I said the curse is? You no longer have the blessing of God. You are on your own. **For your whole nation has been cheating me.** ¹⁰ **Bring all the tithes into the storehouse so there will be enough food in my Temple. If you do,"** says the LORD of Heaven's Armies, **"I will open the windows of heaven for you. I will pour out a blessing so great you won't have enough room to take it in! Try it! Put me to the test! ¹¹ Your crops will be abundant, for I will guard them from insects and disease.] Your grapes will not fall from the vine before they are ripe,"** says the LORD of Heaven's Armies. ¹² **"Then all nations will call you blessed, for your land will be such a delight,"** says the LORD of Heaven's Armies. ¹³ **"You have said terrible things about me,"** says the LORD. **"But you say, 'What do you mean? What have we said against you?'"**

¹⁴ **"You have said, 'What's the use of serving God? What have we gained by obeying his commands or by trying to show the LORD of Heaven's Armies that we are sorry for our sins? ¹⁵ From now on we will call the arrogant blessed. For those who do evil get rich, and those who dare God to punish them suffer no harm.'" ¹⁶ Then those who feared the LORD spoke with each other, and the LORD listened to what they said. In his presence, a scroll of remembrance was written to record the names of those who feared him and always thought about the honour of his name (Malachi 3:9-16 NLT).**

Let me just share this with you. I'm going to talk about Luke and Ester. You know, there are many people out there that say, "What is the point of having a marriage God's way? What's the point? Because look at all the people that don't do marriage God's way. They don't even get married. They just live together and enjoy all the benefits of living together. And they don't have any of God's wrath on them and they don't suffer any harm and they don't have any of those issues in the world. So what's the point of doing it God's way when quite clearly

those people,” we call them arrogant, “we call those people blessed because they have no punishment coming from God because they do what they want.” Isn't that what God said?

So look what Luke and Ester have done. They said, “We're going to do it God's way. We're going to bring God's order.” Now, what they have done is they've just represented God and what God says, ¹⁶ **Then those who feared the Lord spoke with each other.** They said, “Let us do it God's way. ¹⁶ ... **and the LORD listened to what they said. In his presence, a scroll of remembrance was written to record the names of those who feared him and always thought about the honour of his name (Malachi 3:16 NLT).**”

So what did they do? They have honoured His name because of the way they did it. So if you want to say, what's your authority and what are you doing about this? I'm representing God and His order and His ways. If you want it, you can have it. If you want it and you want to have it, then you got to allow me to speak about His ways and about His order so we can honour Him. I'm not trying to be Mr. Bad guy. I'm not trying to be ‘Mr. I'm the one who has all the wisdom in life. You better listen to me.’ I'm here for the order and the honour of God.

Then God says, “Hey, let's write a scroll of all the conversations that Luke and Ester had where they had opportunities to go their own way and they said ‘We're going God's way. We're going God's way. We're going God's way.’” The scroll is still being written for the rest of their lives. As long as they serve God, that scroll will be written. Don't you want to have a relationship like that?

I can tell you that the reason, Pastor Sharon and I have the marriage that we have is because I said, “Lord, I'm going to take Your order and I'm going to be the first one to obey Your order. And I'm going to love her as Christ loves the Church and I'm going to give myself to her.” And all my mates said I'd lost my marbles. I'd lost my backbone and I'd lost my marbles, but I had the order of God burning in my heart.

From that day to this day, the scroll is still being written about how I've loved her and I've served her and I've given my life for her. And I've washed her with the water of the Word and I've presented her to myself with glorious splendor. She has no spot or blemish on her because under my covering of the words of God that I've spoken over her life, she's blessed, protected and God has honoured her. He's honoured me because His life is in her and we together represent Jesus Christ and the Church. And the scroll is being written because we have obeyed Him because there's a covenant that we honour with God.

So, Pastor John, I thought you were talking about the covenant of tithes. It's the same covenant. It's the same God. It's the same covenant. I love God. I honour God. I want to walk with God. I want to give Him my everything, my everything. I give Him my tithe. I don't just give Him my tithe I give Him everything. He has my whole life. He has everything about me. So, every time He looks at us and He says, “John and Sharon, I see you making a decision for Me.” Because you know, I've got a responsibility as a pastor, but I've also got a responsibility as a disciple and as a disciple He's writing about me when I'm preaching this kind of message to you. They're writing in heaven about there's a scroll being written because we fear God and we're honouring Him in this ministry. Praise the Lord.

I want to remind you of something. Can I have that second picture, please? *[Picture of Brother Jerry on the motorcycle that we blessed him with]* I just want to remind you of something. I want to remind you today that in a covenant relationship that we had with Brother Jerry Savelle, out of our honour, we decided that we wanted to bless him. Hey. While he was alive, he was blessed by us.

There's a scroll, your name is written in the scroll because we gave him a covenant blessing that was out of honour. I don't want you to forget because God doesn't forget because He's

written it in His scroll, that when you gave into this motorbike that we bought for Brother Jerry, this gift lives on, even though he's gone. This gift lives on. This token of covenant lives on. This honour lives on. Because even though the time of his being on the earth has passed, our hearts, our walk with God is established on covenant and honour. Come on, people. Isn't this amazing?

Do you remember? He went and he sat on that bike and I said, "Brother Jerry, do you like this bike?" He said, "Yes, I like this bike." Remember, the Lord had prepared me that day before and that morning. He said, "John, be ready because there's a time coming for a gift to be sown." I said, "I'm ready, Lord." And when I walked in and he was sitting on that bike, I said, "You like this bike, Brother Jerry?" He says, "I love this bike. This is the only one I've been looking for. I nearly bought it." And I said, "We're going to buy it for you." And then we went on the California tour with him, he rode that bike out of honour to us for giving him that seed.

There's a scroll written for those who fear God, who said, "Hey, we're not going to do things the way the world says we're going to." Why am I wanting to talk about it like this? Because I want to tell you that the world is going to become more and more woke. If you think wokeness is going to be addressed because President Trump is going to come in there, you're wrong. The world is going to have more evil, more liberal, more stuff is going to happen that's going to take people further and further away from relationships with each other, from relationships with the church, from relationships with God. Don't be surprised.

I've activated our people and I've almost challenged them to come to me with as much of what they can do with artificial intelligence because I don't want the church, certainly not our church, to be behind the curve when it comes to the way people are going to use artificial intelligence. But it's already here that they can duplicate me and get me to speak any kind of message, and you won't know the difference whether it's me talking or someone else. Why do you think people are going to still want to go to church when they can have a meme, some kind of avatar talking to them about scripture? "I'll listen when I want to. Why must I even go to church?" Hey.

Let me tell you, relationships are going to get more important. They're not going to get less important. They're going to get more important and people are going to have less ability to have relationships. They're going to find themselves floundering.

I saw, I think Marcelle sent it to me recently, how people, over the last 30 years, the places they would meet each other and how they would engage each other, and start dating each other. And I think the number is up to 80+ per cent of people nowadays are meeting online. Huh? I wonder what the future of relationships is going to look like in five years' time.

I've had this conversation with Garth and I said to Garth, I said, "Garth, you realise that Keira-Leigh is 10, in five years time, she's going to be 15. She turns 15, she's going to be a woman in every sense of the word. Everything she thinks about, everything that's happening to her, emotions, she's going to be in a different level of person than she is in her little body now. The way that things will influence her in five years time will be very different to the way she will receive influences, even right now, because she's going to change. As she changes, the way the world is going to be able to influence her will also change."

And so what if the Church just, if we just sit back and say, "I don't think we'll be so radical in our preaching." Just for one year. Just for one year, we say, "We're not going to press the envelope with covenant, with God's way of doing things. We're just going to let it lie for a year." What do you think the Church will look like in a year?

That culture, the world's influence will so infiltrate your thinking, my thinking, our speech, the way that we deal with each other. Right? I mean, it's already this way. So many, so many, many, many churches, you don't go to that church anymore and say, "There's an order that you don't sleep together before you get married." Most of the churches out there, people go there to meet other Christians, then they sleep together because that's the way the world does it, even though we're Christians. So they're saying, "I like the place to meet you, but I'm going to still live the way the world has taught me." Because the culture of the world has infiltrated the Church to such a level that the Church doesn't know what's right and wrong anymore.

I certainly don't want to talk to you about right and wrong language. I want to talk to you about spiritual life, and covenant language, and the order of God because the blessing is in the covenant. The blessing is in the order of God. Blessing doesn't just reveal itself in one year or six months. Because everything happens like how many, how many YouTube reels can I watch in an hour? How many Instagram reels can I see in 10 minutes so that I can get a window into the world that's happening around me in 10 minutes? Like that's real. Here's what I want to say to you today, and I want to leave you with this.

I thank God that God called me into the earth at such a time. Over all of these years, He has called me and I have been privileged to walk with great men. Now those men have gone to heaven and Brother Jerry, he made me promise him, he said, "Promise me." He said, "John never stops preaching faith." I promise you, I will never stop preaching faith and I will always teach you about the covenant ways of God and the order of God. Because if there's anything that we can be sure of about a future that is getting more and more uncertain.

Come on, people, if you don't see the signs of Iran and Israel now directly shooting rockets at each other. And Israel in a full-blown war with Hezbollah and Hamas and the West Bank and America being drawn into the war and the rest of the world and Russia.

In the Old Testament times, Russia and Iran were called Gog and Magog and you will read all about it in the book of Daniel. I mean, I'm not an end-time preacher, but there's some things that I can see that are happening right now that we just can't ignore those things because there's going to be a time, I was reading a scripture to somebody.

Maybe I should read it to you quickly. I'll just read it to you very quickly. I won't read a lot to you. Just give me a moment here. I want to read this to you. In Hebrews chapter one, verse 10. ¹⁰ " **And the Lord in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth and the heavens are the works of Your hands.** Watch what he says and ¹¹ **They will perish, but You God remain forever. They, the heaven and the earth, they will all grow old like a garment, like a cloak You will fold them up, and they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will not fail**" (Hebrews 1:10 NKJV).

There is going to come a time in the future where God is going to say, "Enough time on this earth." And He's going to fold it like a garment and He's going to say, "Done, new heaven and a new earth." Until then, we best stick with the order of God. If you look at the way people are living on the earth, there is a lot of bad stuff. Sin is abounding. Praise the Lord.

I'm confident of this. As long as I am talking about how I fear God and I live for Him, then I can say, "Let the covenant... Let the covenant speak." That's why I wanted to show you that picture of Brother Jerry. Let the covenant speak. Let the honour of God speak. Let your walk with God, let it speak. And not for one minute should you quit speaking that God is for you and He's not against you. He is your covenant God. He is the One who established the rights of the covenant. He wants you to live in His covenant. He wants all the blessings of the covenant to be yours to have. That's the reason why He's having me talk about it because if you live in the covenant, you will experience all the blessings of the covenant.

It doesn't matter what's happening in the world. God will protect you. God will stand with you. God's order will be the thing that preserves you. Hallelujah. Praise Jesus.

Tonight at five o'clock, we're going to have a wonderful one-hour service. Amen. Isn't God amazing last week? People got saved. We had a one-hour service and people came and got saved. Praise the Lord. I see one of them here. George, you got saved last week? Yes. Is it George? Yes. Praise the Lord. Hallelujah. Why don't you all stand with me, please?

Hey, I better do this. Check, I came prepared again. *[Pastor John taking out his money for the tithe]*. Did you have your money out? *[Pastor John is speaking to Pastor Christi]*. I got there before you, Pastor Christi. So, you better sit again, please. Let's take up an offering everybody.

Thank you. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. You know, when I was trained, being trained as a preacher, you know what they said? Never take an offering without music. They also said, "Don't ever have a quiet moment in church. Either you got to have music or you got to have preaching or you got to have an altar call, but there should never be silence in the church. Either you've got to have music or you've got to have preaching or you've got to have an altar call, but there should never be silence in the church."

I heard all of this stuff and I said, "You know what, Lord, I don't like a program. I'm just going to do church the way that I feel led to be doing church." So, I have quiet moments and we don't have music when we take offerings. Praise the Lord. I don't think God is any diminished in our presence because we don't do a "right program." That's why they call it 'theological seminary.' Otherwise known as 'theological cemetery,' because that's where good anointed preachers go to die because now they've got to run the program and not walk with God.

Listen, people, I know more about church than you'll ever know. What I've forgotten about church you won't even know because by His grace you will never ever know what those theological seminaries-cemetery guys ever taught me. You will just experience authenticity of a church living together with people. From my mouth to God's ears. Come on, Hans. Now, you can all stand with me. So, if you want to know why I do church this way, part of it is like I will not have a program, I will not yield to a program. I will yield to the Spirit of God. Hallelujah.

Won't you just stretch out your hands, here, and pray with me? Thank You, Lord, for a seed that we sow. Thank You for the covenant of tithing. Thank You for Your blessing us with the ability to give to You because our trust is in You, Lord. And we are so grateful that we can put all of our trust in You. Thank You, thank You, thank You, thank You. I ask You to multiply the seed that has been sown and according to Your covenant, Father, I declare that wherever income is lost because of any reason whatsoever, that You will make up the lost income, in Jesus' name. Do you agree with this prayer today? And you all say? Amen. Thank you, Hans. Glory to Jesus.

Won't you put your hand here and say; "I'm blessed going out and I'm blessed coming in. I'm blessed every day, every way, everywhere, all day, every day, in Jesus' name. Hallelujah." You're a child of God, you have a covenant with Him and you can agree with this prayer and you can have everything that God has got for you. It's all good. If you want to hear more about the goodness of God, come back tonight. I'll be talking about the goodness of God. Hallelujah. Thank you for coming to church, everybody. Bye, y'all.