CITYLIGHT
CHURCH

SERMON NOTES & TRANSCRIPT

The Wealth Principles They Don't Preach in Church

Four Things You Must Do to Build Your Wealth and Live the Life You Desire

You can have more in life, but prosperity is birthed out of pain and built by obedience, not luck. Develop a vision, get on a written budget, sow in the direction you want to go, and take massive action.

PREACHED BY
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SERIES
We're Passionate About Giving Generously

MAIN TEXT
1 Chronicles 4:9-10

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01

Sermon Transcript

Amen. Well, join me in your Bibles, if you will, in 1 Chronicles 4. This will kind of just be a jumping off point for today. A lot of things coming up over the next few weeks in terms of preaching. Next week is Palm Sunday. I have a word from the Lord for that. Easter Sunday is coming. I have a word from the Lord for that. And then following that, we're going to talk about a value called "We're Hopeful About Tomorrow." I'm going to be talking to you about the end of the world, the end of all things, because "in these last days" is what Hebrews says — in these last days.

> **HEBREWS 1:2** ESV
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> 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.

So I'm going to be talking to you about it. I think if you'll be there, I'm going to shock all of you with those messages. And half of you may come back after that series. Amen. We have this good time. That's fun. That's how you know. Hey, you know what I learned? Sometimes you just got to preach the word. It's a good practice. The word is crazy because it'll just work itself out. It does what it said it'll do. Amen. Hallelujah. All right. So 1 Chronicles 4 today, week two of Living and Giving. I'm going to talk to you today about building your wealth.

I'd get excited, because that's what I want — I want some money to show up. Amen. I want to build my wealth. So today is one we'll talk to you about. 1 Chronicles chapter four, verse nine talks about a man named Jabez. He's only mentioned in this verse, two verses long. "Jabez was more honorable than his brothers. And his mother called his name Jabez, because I bore him in pain. So Jabez called upon the God of Israel, saying, 'Oh, that you would bless me and enlarge my border, that your hand might be with me, and that you'd keep me from harm so that it might not bring me pain.'"

And God granted what he asked. God granted what he asked.

> **1 CHRONICLES 4:9-10** ESV
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> 9 Jabez was more honorable than his brothers; and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, "Because I bore him in pain." 10 Jabez called upon the God of Israel, saying, "Oh that you would bless me and enlarge my border, and that your hand might be with me, and that you would keep me from harm so that it might not bring me pain!" And God granted what he asked.

Jabez prayed a prayer that the average churchgoer would label as selfish, self-centered. I bet somebody walked by Jabez and said, "Hey, you know, God ain't no genie in a bottle." Because that's what people say. Every time you talk about the Lord doing something substantial or fantastic, or anytime you start bringing up money or saying God will do X, Y, and Z for me, people start saying, "Well, he ain't no genie in a bottle, bro." Nobody said he was a genie in a bottle, but I'm going to tell you this. He is God who came in the flesh, who died on a cross so that you and me might have eternal life and life to the full.

> **JOHN 10:10** ESV
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> 10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

And the Bible says that "if he did not withhold his son, how will he not also with him freely give us all things," and all things means all things.

> **ROMANS 8:32** ESV
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> 32 He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

You can have power. You can be healed. You can be made whole. Your family can be saved. You can serve the Lord. The people around you can serve the Lord and bless God. He'll touch your finances if you let him. Amen. Hallelujah. Now I believe this stuff, and let me tell you why I believe it. I believe it because God touched our finances after we stepped away from ministry. See, I don't have that. I don't know what it is.

I'd like it, but I don't have that thing. I haven't ever gotten rich on other people's donations. I don't know how you do that. I haven't figured it out. Everybody says all these preachers get rich on people's giving. Preachers only want you to tithe because that's how they get rich. I never figured that equation out. Now I'm not saying I wouldn't mind it. It ain't for lack of trying. It's ignorant. Say amen. I don't know how to do it, but I've never. So we stepped away from ministry and God touched our finances completely detached from the ministry. So we know how to see increase coming to our life that has nothing to do with this, which is good for me for one reason, because it keeps my preaching real honest.

Listen, the most dangerous thing in the world is a preacher who don't need your money. And I don't. Let me just say that when I step up here, fundraising time is over. I'm here to preach the word. Amen. That's dangerous, but it's also good for you, because it means that I can share some things with you that are not completely detached from your lived experience. Because there is a truth. Pastor John, you know this — this world is different than this world. There's a difference between the pulpit and the fellowship.

There is a difference. And anybody who acts like it's just the same, it's not okay. It is not the same world. But the fact that we were able to engage this part of the Lord's blessing outside of the pulpit, outside of leading worship, to be completely engaged in business, in normal life, in the stuff you wake up and do every single day, means I've got some stuff I can share with you. Amen. I'm already preaching longer than I should. So let's go here. Amen. So building wealth — when we talk about building wealth, because that's what I'll talk to you about this morning.

We'll talk to you about building your wealth. I'm trying to get more money in your pocket today. Everybody just say, "Yes, Lord." I'm trying to get more money in your pocket today. Building wealth. When I talk about building wealth, it's intertwined with the lifestyle that you live. To me, your wealth and your lifestyle are kind of the same thing. If you have a desired lifestyle you want to live, wealth is connected to that. If your wealth changes, your lifestyle changes. And if you don't believe that, let it go down. Then it changes by necessity.

You ain't felt it hard till you buy off-brand bread. Amen. You know what I'm talking about? So it'll change if it goes down. It'll also change if it goes up. It'll change your lifestyle. So I'm talking today about building your wealth, but I'm also talking about living the life you want to live, because they're intrinsically intertwined. So here's what I want you to hear

upfront: you can have more in life. You can have more in life. And I would encourage you on two fronts. When I say that you can have more in life, do not let the church beat that out of you.

The church has a tendency by and large to make you feel like you need to be broke, busted, and disgusted, and then God will be happy with you. That is not the case. That is not — you can have more in life. Believe it or not, you can have money and not become some crazy depraved sinner. Like, you can have. But here's the thing. If that thing's in you, the money will just bring it out. The problem isn't money. It's what's inside of you. There are a lot of poor people that don't have enough money to express those desires. But Jesus said it's not so much what you do, but what's in your heart.

> **MATTHEW 15:18-19** ESV
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> [18] But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. [19] For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander.

It's what's in your heart. So it's already there. Does money give it access to come out? Yes. You can do some crazy stuff with money. You do crazy things, but you do crazy stuff without money. In fact, I watch poor people do crazy stuff all the time. I watch poor dysfunctional people do the craziest mess you've ever seen in your life. So anybody can do that. Those have nothing to do with one another. There is no ethic to money. Money has no ethic. It is just a tool. It is just a tool. It's just a tool. It's just a resource. So you can have more money.

So number one, don't let the church beat that out of you. Number two, don't let the area beat that out of you. Amen. Sometimes people who come from the South, where I am from — I know all y'all think I sound like a Yankee. I can't win for losing. I sound like a Yankee here. I sound like a hick everywhere else I go. Just getting judged nonstop. But sometimes when we come from areas like this, we can get real comfortable with things we shouldn't be comfortable with. Not only can we get comfortable with living a lesser than life, sometimes we'll get comfortable with stuff that don't make no sense whatsoever.

Because we will look at someone in our family with the worst behavior, who we know is a problem. We'll let them come around and do things around people in our family we know we shouldn't let them get around. And then we'll just say things like, "Well, brother, blood is thicker than water." That don't mean anything. That means nothing. That's not in the Bible, by the way. There's only one blood I'm concerned about in the Bible, and that's the blood of Jesus Christ, which is strong enough to change everything about. I just am kind of like preaching out the gate here.

I came out of a cannon. I'm sorry. I feel good this morning. I'm kind of in a world I get in where — I told y'all a couple of weeks ago, if you didn't hear it, you need to hear this. When I talk about money, I stop being Pastor Jason. I just kind of become Jason Mayfield and I just talk to you how it is. So, all right, here we go. So don't let the area beat it out of you. Don't let hometown beat it out of you. Don't settle for less because less is around you. You can become more in the middle of nothing, because it's not about what you're around.

It's not about what you've been exposed to. The things I'm going to share with you today will help you get there. But the reality is that prosperity — any type of prosperity, I know that's a cuss word in the church, but I'm going to say it anyway — prosperity is birthed out of pain. When we read this a moment ago, Jabez was named Jabez because he was birthed in pain. That's what he was. He was a painful baby for the mother to have. And she named him that. He came out of pain. Well, guess what? Prosperity comes out of pain. You want to see God do a great work in your life.

It comes out of pain. This is where the prosperity gospel does kind of — and I don't even like that phrase. I don't like that word, because I don't think we know what it means. But these prosperity preachers on TV, sometimes it is a little — everything will go good, good, good, good, good, good, good, good, good. And that is not true. Prosperity comes from pain. You're going to have to go through something to get where you want to be. You're going to have to experience something. Life is not all right and to the left — or right and up. It's not going to be that. You're going to have to go through some things in your life. Psalm 119 says this. It says, "It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn your statutes." I said this earlier when we were praying with the team this morning, but Peter said this.

> **PSALM 119:71** ESV
>
> 71 It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn your statutes.

He said, "After you've suffered a little while, then I will establish you." There is a reality that to get to the point where you're going to experience any type of increase, or get to a lifestyle that you want to live, or see your wealth increase, you're going to have to go through a measure of difficulty.

> **1 PETER 5:10** ESV
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> 10 And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.

It is the price for the blessing, because you can't be trusted if you don't go through anything and you get hit with more money than anybody in your family's ever had. You got to go through some stuff. You got to experience some things. Now, sometimes that's going to be an extreme pain. Some people go through an extreme pain in their life that drives them to change. Some people go through abuse and abandonment, and they look at that and they experience it and they say, "I'm going to change. I'm not going to live this way anymore." And then other people, it just takes a light affliction, and you never really know what it's going to be.

My dad — I've talked about my parents quite a bit and will continue to do so — but my dad was an alcoholic, abusive man. My dad was rough, rough individual. And later in his life, he stopped drinking after I had left home. Thanks for that. But after I left home, he did stop drinking. He got sober. I think the last 10, 15 years of his life, he was sober. And my dad had done all kinds of stuff. Nothing had gotten his attention. I called the police on my father twice so I could safely function in the house. One time he had broke my mother's nose, just so you don't think I'm over here being a whiny baby.

The second time I called the police on him, he pulled a gun on me. It wasn't because he grounded me, John. It was for a reason. And so I'd called the police on him twice. None of that got his attention. He broke my mother's nose. That didn't get his attention. He pulled a gun on me. That didn't get his attention. He had gotten in a big wreck when I was in high school, because I knew, because I'm waking up during high school having to drive him to work down in downtown Birmingham for like three or four weeks. He had gotten in a bad wreck, messed his car all up.

Funny thing is he'd gotten drunk and he had gone to buy a new flat screen TV. He said that was the most expensive TV he had ever bought. Amen. And so he'd gotten in that wreck. Nothing changed. One day, he goes down to Birmingham to pick up his paycheck, which first of all, I didn't even know he did. I was like, you pick up your paycheck in

Birmingham? But he went down to Birmingham to pick up his paycheck. He was a firefighter in Birmingham. Goes to pick up his paycheck. And while he's down there, he barely taps someone's car while he's parking. He's parking in it.

This frightened him to such a great degree that he got sober for the last 10, 15 years of his life. Terrified him. He had done way worse stuff than this. Goes to Birmingham and then all of a sudden he's like, "Oh, I've got to get sober." Sometimes it can be a very light thing, a very light pain that you experience that drives you into prosperity, drives you into life change. But nevertheless, it's going to come through some form of pain. And when you go through those pains, you have to make a decision to take action toward the life you want. That's why it requires pain.

Because if there's no pain, you'll never make the decision. How many of you know you need to get in shape but you haven't done it? Because you don't hurt enough. Because you're not tying your shoes enough times during the day. But that 30 seconds in the morning, you go, "Oh, I'm going to start going to the gym." Right? But it's not enough. A heart attack might change that. Don't want you to have to go through a heart attack. But I'm going to tell you this, being inconveniently heavy and snoring at night has not driven me to live my best life yet. Amen. Right?

And so you're going to have to go through some kind of pain that brings you to the point that you finally make the decision and you take action toward the life you want. So today what I want to do is talk to you about four things that you must do if you want to build your wealth and live the life you desire. Number one — and write these down. Some of this is going to sound so fluffy, but I promise you it'll change your life. Number one, you've got to develop a vision for your life. You've got to develop a vision for your life. People often reject this idea of having a vision.

I think it's for one of two reasons. I think on one side, people hear you got to have a vision and it sounds real lofty. It's like, "Oh my God, how do I develop a vision? A vision? How do I get a vision for my life?" So it sounds like this is big deal. And then other people reject it because they go, "It sounds like woo woo nonsense. I'm going to get a vision for my life, and that's going to — if I picture what I want my life to be like, that's going to change everything." No, but you can't change anything without it. It won't. In fact, having a vision for your life won't change anything, but without it, you can't change anything.

So it's absolutely critical. And it's more practical than you might imagine. Vision is simply about setting the heading for your life. Like a captain of a ship or a navigator has to set the heading in on a ship. You've got to set the heading for your life. It's about figuring out what destination you want to get to. Where are you going? Where do you want to go? In fact, here's some questions you should ask yourself. What do you want to do? Where do you want to go? What do you want your life to look like? That's all you need to get a vision for your life.

What do you want it to look like? What do you want your life to feel like? What do you want to do? Where are the places you want to visit? Where's the places you want to go? And when you have a vision, what it does is it becomes a ruler that every decision you make is measured against. Because if you have a vision to be a doctor, but all you want to do is go out and build stuff in the shop — look, I think building stuff in the shop is awesome, but a doctor does not it make. Because if you show up with a hacksaw in a surgery room, they're going to have a problem with you.

You better take your chop saw out the OR. Amen. We don't need no impact drivers in here. Amen. I don't know. I guess there probably is a use for an impact driver at some point. Orthopedics. Amen. No, you have to get a vision for your life so you can measure your decisions against that. You start deciding what you want to do. I was fortunate. Not everybody has this, but the Lord called me to the ministry very early. And so I knew what I wanted to do. And I actually was able to build my high school classes around what I was going to go do. And that was to be a minister of music.

That's what I thought I would do forever. In my senior year of high school, the Lord told me I'd pastor, and he was right. Amen. But I wanted to go do that. And so I started building my life around that, building my life as a teenager around it. I was in choir. I was in band. Senior year of high school, I got into mass communications where we edited video, and I never knew how important that was going to be in the future. They weren't making videos in church when I was coming up, but now it's like everything's on video. Amen. Anybody remember 2020?

Mass communications came in handy. Hallelujah. Right? And I was building my life around that. I would get into my room as a teenager and I had a keyboard in there, and I would play the keyboard and I would write charts out for the band. And the band never even saw them, because I didn't have a band to show them to, because they wouldn't even let me lead worship at my church. In fact, I'll tell you how powerful vision is. I led worship a sum total of five times, and at least three of them were on accident and last minute, before I became a music pastor. That's the power of vision — with no experience, to step in and be able to do the job.

That's the power of vision. It's the power of vision, getting a vision for your life. And then once you have a vision, once you know where you want to go, you can actually reverse engineer what it takes to get there. For instance, we all know if you want to be a doctor — I'm going to use doctors this morning. Amen. If you want to be a doctor, you got to go to medical school. Okay. So if you want to be a doctor and you sign up to get a ballet major at the University of Mobile, you heading in the wrong direction. That's not the thing you need to be doing. Nothing against ballet majors.

But again, I don't want any of them doing anything to my heart. You got to figure out — when you know where you want to go, you can reverse engineer what it takes to get there. What skills do you need? What things do you need? What do you need to accomplish? What are the mile markers you need to do to get there? Again, if you want to be a doctor, you set that mile marker. You say, "About 28, I know I can start stepping in and doing that stuff. And this is everything I need to accomplish before 28 years old." By the way, we're way out of the scope of what I understand about being a doctor.

So I'm throwing that 28 out. Just think it sounds good. Amen. So you reverse engineer what you want. That's the power of vision. When you have a vision, you can reverse engineer. You ask this question. You say, "What does it take? What do I have to become to realize the vision?" Nehemiah chapter six says this. Some men had come to Nehemiah. They're trying to get him to stop building the temple that God is rebuilding in Israel, having his people rebuild, and they come to stop him. And this is what Nehemiah said. Verse 10 in chapter six says, "Now, when I went to the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah, son of Mehetabel, who was confined to his home, he said, 'Let us meet together in the house of God within the temple. And let us close the doors of the temple, for they are coming to kill you. They are coming to kill you by night.'" And this is what Nehemiah said. Nehemiah said, "Should such a man as I run away? Should such a man as I run away? And what man such as I could go into the temple and live? I will not go in." I'm telling you, when you get a vision for your life, you get to say this.

> **NEHEMIAH 6:10-11** ESV
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> 10 Now when I went into the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah, son of Mehetabel, who was confined to his home, he said, "Let us meet together in the house of God, within the temple. Let us close the doors of the temple, for they are coming to kill you. They are coming to kill you by night." 11 But I said, "Should such a man as I run away? And what man such as I could go into the temple and live? I will not go in."

If you are a person that's heading towards the vision, everything in your life gets to get measured by this question.

“Should a man such as I? Should a woman such as I? Should I do this? Is this something that someone like me would do?” Listen, I could get on a podcast. I could start a podcast and I could use extreme profanity. And I could talk about sports all day long. And I could talk about God knows what on a podcast. I could do that. But the reason I don’t is for this simple reason: should a man such as I? I know what I should and shouldn’t do. Listen, I don’t think if you say some cuss words, you’re going to go to hell. But when preachers get up and they start cussing and using profanity and stuff, I’m like, “Man, you know who you are.

Should a man such as you do this? Should you?” That’s how you start answering. Well, if you want to be a doctor, you ask yourself — I don’t know why I’m going to be a doctor. That’s going to be my second mountain to cross. Amen. But you start asking yourself, “Should a man such as I do this? Should a woman such as I do this?” You want to accomplish certain things in your life. You’ve got to ask yourself, “Should I do this?” Listen, some of y’all, if y’all are in a dating situation, if you’re young teenagers, listen to me, I’m going to come over here and talk to all y’all for a minute.

Listen to me. When it comes to getting with a boy or a girl, having girlfriends, boyfriends, y’all listen to me. Y’all don’t be dating these losers. Don’t date losers, because should a man such as you, should a woman such as you? No, you don’t need that in your life. You don’t need to date. And I’m going to tell you, women, listen to me. Y’all sometimes go through three or four total idiots before you get it together. Listen to your preacher and jump right to a good one. Amen. Hallelujah. I just felt like tossing that in. So one, you need to develop a vision for your life.

By the way, it’s never too late to develop a vision for your life. We’ve seen people at 35, 40, 45, 50, 55, 60. I’m about to have an auction here. But we’ve seen people at all types of ages and stages in life, people who have been through absolute hell on earth. We have seen people who were raised in good families, bad families, been in good marriages, had three bad marriages. We’ve seen people in all kinds of states be able to get a vision for their life and change their directory — or change their trajectory. It does not matter what you’re going through, what you’ve been through.

God can do a great work in your life if you’ll participate with him in the process. You ought to give the Lord a praise. Number two — remember, money, wealth, and your lifestyle, they’re all intrinsically intertwined. Number two is you got to get on a written budget. A written budget is essential. A written budget is essential. You cannot spend more money than you make and get wealthy. If you could, I’d be King Midas. The Bible says you can’t serve God and money.

> **MATTHEW 6:24** ESV
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> 24 “No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.

But I want to tell you this, while money makes a terrible master, it makes a wonderful servant.

And the way that you show your money who’s boss is you make a decision where it’s going to go before you ever consult it. See, when you get into the checkout line and you start making decisions on what you’re going to get when you hit the checkout line, or when you go to the store and you just kind of go browse, you start making decisions — that’s you consulting your wallet. You’re consulting some good presidents, but some dead presidents. Amen. That’s who you’re consulting. No, you don’t need to do that. You need to make a decision on your money before you ever spend it.

That’s how you let it know who’s boss. The money don’t have a voice in what you’re going to do. It doesn’t get to speak to what you’re going to do. It doesn’t get to decide what you’re going to do. You’ve already made a decision on paper

between you, yourself, and I. And if you're real smart, you'll involve the Holy Ghost. Amen. And so you make a decision before you ever spend any money. And what that'll do is that'll keep money your servant rather than your master. Amen. And so there's two types of budgets every person ought to make. This is the first budget: it is the budget that controls the money you have.

Everybody got something. I know some of y'all only got to budget $11.18 when you get home, but you got to budget what you got. Amen. So you budget the money that you have. You got to get control of your money. If you want to go to the next level in your life, you want to build your wealth, you got to get control of your money. Great resource I'm going to recommend to you is Dave Ramsey's Total Money Makeover. It is absolutely fantastic. I had to read it for about three or four years before I ever listened to him. But when I listened to him, my money got taken care of.

Amen. In fact, we were able to pay off $63,801.99 in six months. And I didn't start with no inheritance on that. All right. I just figured out if I made my wife work, I can make a lot of money. Amen. She good at it. Hallelujah. And so Total Money Makeover, Dave Ramsey, great resource, DaveRamsey.com. Go check that out. The second budget you need to make is the budget your vision requires. So you got to get a vision for your life. You got to figure out what you want to do, where you want to go. But what I've found is a lot of people will do that step and never go so far as to find out what that would actually cost them.

So some of y'all go, "Man, I want a seven-bedroom house with eight bathrooms and a big — I don't want a normal size pool. I want a double size pool." I don't know if there's a normal size pool. I want a double size pool. And then you ain't ever looked to see what stuff like that costs. And when it's more than $125,000, you go, "What?" No, I don't even know what it'd be, but I'm guessing 3.2, folks. That's about where I think you're going to be, about 3.2 million. And you've never figured that out. You've never looked at it. You've never figured it out. You've never figured out what it would cost for you to do the thing.

"Well, I want to travel the world." Okay. Well, what's a ticket to Atlanta cost? This is stuff you need to know. You need to have an idea of this so you can create a budget for the life you want to live and then, again, reverse engineer it. Now, I call this a faith budget. This is the most fun money you'll ever spend, because you ain't got to spend it. Hallelujah. We're doing projects here right now, but I've got $8 million worth of projects we could be doing. Amen. Those are fun budgets to write, because I don't have to worry about it. Ain't happening. Amen.

But this does cause you to actually consider the cost for the life you want to live. And you'll be shocked how quickly you'll go from needing a five-bedroom house to a three-bedroom house doing you just fine. Right. But it starts by figuring out what those things cost. And it causes you to think — if you don't do this step, it causes you to think by default that arbitrary amounts of money can do anything. So there are amounts of money that if I said right now — so, for instance, if I said if you made $10,000 a month. Okay. Now, that just settled on people one of two different ways.

There are people in the room who heard $10,000 a month and thought, "My God, we could go anywhere. We could be anyone. We could change our names for $10,000." It sounds like a windfall. Then there's other people in the room who just heard $10,000 a month and said, "My God, how can you live on $10,000 a month? How can you do it? How can you live on such a little amount of money?" So the money is arbitrary in your mind if you don't know what it actually accomplishes. So you'll just hear amounts. I remember hearing amounts. I actually had a guy who I knew who was making a lot more money than us at the time.

That's my favorite part of that sentence. Amen. He was making a lot more money than us at the time, and I asked him one day. I said, "Why haven't you paid off your house?" Because in my mind, you're making that much money, your

house just ought to be paid off. Well, here's one reason. Something to help you when you do your little budget: 50% of that is getting taken away from you. By the way, self-employment and a lot of money will clarify the way you vote real fast. Just so you start filling out them tax forms at the end of the year. Those of y'all that are on W-2, y'all need to know this.

They're taking tons of money from you. You might want to look at some of them tax forms when you get it back. Amen. And it doesn't matter if they're Republican, Democrat. They all want your money. Amen. So you need to figure out what your vision actually costs to do, so you don't think that just arbitrary amount of money will do it. You think, "I want to travel the world. Well, I need to make about $5,000 a month." I remember when I was making $30,000 a year, and I thought I can do anything in the whole world. $30,000 a year is like maybe two trips a year.

You ain't going to be traveling to Italy every six weeks on $30,000 a year. If you make $30,000 a year, I'm not trying to insult you. I'm not trying to say that's not a lot of money. But try to go to Italy every six weeks, and you'll come back and go, "Preacher, you were right. It doesn't work that way. We're just going to have lasagna at the house." Stouffer's for now. Don't turn your nose up at Stouffer's. Don't let that money make you snooty. Stouffer's lasagna is good. Amen. And their macaroni and cheese is good. Amen. Let me tell you one thing I have learned is money does not change the way you eat.

Amen. You get hungry enough, you be eyeballing a can of Vienna sausages with the best of them. Amen. Give me some little mustard and some saltine crackers, and let's be ready to... I got to stop talking about dumb stuff now. We got to move on with my message. And I want to prepare you as you start to make money. The people around you are going to think you can do anything. People around you are going to think you can do anything. You only got to make about $100 more than your neighbor, and they think you are loaded. Okay? But you want to figure it out, because all money has limits.

And when you do this practice of budgeting the lifestyle that you want to live, it actually brings you back to your vision. You go back to your vision. You revisit your vision, and now you're in this cycle of making decisions. It's helping you reverse engineer what you need to do. Number three, number three, you go where you sow. You go where you sow. Last week, I talked about the supernatural effect of sowing financial seed into the kingdom. We talked about tithing, sowing, and giving. If you weren't here, I would really encourage you to go back and listen to that message.

But this week, rather than the supernatural effect of sowing, I want to talk to you just for a minute about the natural effect of sowing. Matthew chapter 6 says this. It says, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." There is something about sowing that gives you a physical, tangible ability to turn your heart toward what you sow in.

> **MATTHEW 6:21** ESV
>
> [21] For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Like if you want a heart for missions, you just sow into missions, and all of a sudden you'll find yourself going, "Man, I really want to see missionaries succeed." If you want to see your family come to know the Lord, there's something about sowing into the house of the Lord, which what it'll do is it won't twist God's arm to get them into the house of the Lord.

It'll turn your heart towards the importance of getting your kids into the house of the Lord. I'm telling you, you'll see long-term effect off of that. But you lean yourself in that direction when you sow, because you go where you sow. I said

earlier, vision is a heading. Sowing is like a rudder. It bends you in the directions of where you want to be. A few years ago, I had a ministry that was online at the time, and I was preaching a lot on the internet. We were seeing a lot of great effect, but I was having a lot of trouble getting content produced. It was just taking me forever to get videos out.

But I had a buddy. His name is Trey Van Camp. In fact, Trey Van Camp's granddaddy led Pastor Ed down at Redemption to the Lord. Amen. So I'm connected with people in town already. Hallelujah. And so Trey Van Camp makes videos, but Trey could just turn videos out left and right, just left and right. Now, I don't think I've ever told this publicly, and I think the statute of limitations on the gift sowing — I can just tell you what I did. So I called Trey up one day, and I said, "I'll tell you what I want to do. I want to buy you a brand new computer, but I'm going to name this seed, and I'm naming this seed my own productivity in making videos.

I'm going to sow this seed into your life, but what I'm believing for is the ability to make videos," which made him very comfortable as a Southern Baptist pastor. I said, "But I ain't doing it for you. I'm doing it for me." Hallelujah. And so I did that. I sent him a brand new computer, and over the next three months, I made over 100 videos. I was doing like maybe four a month and went to — what is that, 30, 35 a month that I was making? I'm telling you, it was crazy, but that's the power, because I sowed in a direction. My life went in a direction. And you know what you want to do.

You've got the vision, and you know how much it's going to cost, so you have a faith budget. Well, here's what that's actually doing for you. Last week, I talked to you about being able to name your seed by faith and name your soil by faith, but what I didn't talk to you about last week is how to figure out what size your seed ought to be. What should your seed look like? Well, I just gave you the components to figure it out, because you've got a vision. You know how much it's going to cost. Well, that tells you what size that seed you sow ought to look like.

Now, last week — I'm just going to review this real quick — I talked to you about the four laws of sowing and reaping. These are the four laws. You reap what you sow. You reap where you sow.

> **GALATIANS 6:7** ESV
>
> 7 Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.

You reap more than you sow, and you reap after you sow. Those are the laws of sowing and reaping. But when you sow a seed, remember, you reap what you sow. The seed will always produce after its likeness, okay? So whatever you sow for and sow into, and whatever you name your seed, that's going to produce after its likeness. But there's also a quantity factor to that, that you reap what you sow.

You reap what you sow, and here's the reality. I'm never going to tell you. We're never going to have a service — at least I cannot fathom ever doing this — but we're never going to have a service where everybody shows up, and I say there are five people who need to give $10,000, and God's going to give you your miracle breakthrough. I'm never going to tell you what size your seed needs to be. I can't do that. I can't set the size of your seed, okay? And any preacher that does that's doing it under duress. They got to pay for something, okay? I'm not going to do that, right?

But what I will tell you is if you have a $1 million vision — just a nice round number here. You got a $1 million vision. If you have a vision for your life, and it's going to cost you a million dollars to make it happen. If you got a $1 million vision, I'm going to tell you right now, a $10 seed in the bucket ain't going to do it, because it's not in the likeness, because we can all do a 10 here. We can all do a 20 there. Easter's coming up. I'm going to get more 10s and 20s in the offering than we get all year long. Anybody can show up and tip God, but when we sow, we actually have to sow in a way that we feel it.

It's real. It's something. And if you have a $1 million outcome you want — I don't know what the number is for you. It might be a $1,000 seed. It might be a $10,000. I don't know what it is, but I'm going to tell you this. It ain't $7.33, because it doesn't produce after its likeness. If you need $70 to get through the week, $7 might be the seed. I'm not trying to get your money, folks. I want to be very clear. I'm not. I'm trying to put money in your pocket. And if you don't give, I'm not trying to get you to give. I'm just trying to get more money into the hands of people who do give.

It's the fastest way to fundraise. I'm going to make my givers rich. Amen. Start sending y'all stock tips or something. Hallelujah. Ashleigh said this recently in a training she was doing with some of her people that are in the business with her. And she said this. She said, "If you work at a 10, you'll get paid at a 10. If you work at a 3, you're going to get paid at a 3. But you cannot work at a 3 and then get upset that you don't get paid at a 10." And I'm just going to tell you this. It's the same thing with sowing. You can't sow at a 3 and be upset that you're not reaping at a 10.

Because the laws of sowing and reaping determine that you reap what you sow. Period. That works financially. It works in every area of your life. For instance, you're not going to go home and cuss your wife out every night and her fawn over you when it's time to go to the bedroom. Because you reap what you sow. Is that a little close to home for everybody? Amen. Okay. So, and let me just say this. If you're upset with me right now because I said you can't sow a small seed — well, what if all I've got is a small seed? Okay, that's fine. But what if I can't?

"You're telling me my size of my seed isn't good enough for me to get what I want, no matter how big it is? Isn't God big enough to do it?" Folks, I just need you to hear. That is not the Bible. That is Jack and the Beanstalk. That's what you're confused with. Amen. Okay. All right. Next. Final one. Number four. Look at your neighbor and say, "That was better than you thought it was. Listen to it later." Number four. You need to take massive action. You need to take massive action. You are designed to work. You are designed to work. In Genesis chapter two, the Lord puts Adam in the garden and says this: "The Lord took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it."

> **GENESIS 2:15** ESV
>
> 15 The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.

This is before sin enters. This is before the fall of man. This is when the earth is perfect and everything is going. It's all spaghetti and meatballs with no weight gain. Amen. I mean, we're talking about the good stuff, right? This is when life is perfect, and nevertheless, Adam was designed to work. You are designed to work. You are designed to work. I just need to get this. There's about five of y'all that need to hear this more than the others. You are designed to work. You work to eat. That is a Bible principle. "If a man doesn't work, he won't eat."

> **2 THESSALONIANS 3:10** ESV
>
> 10 For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat.

So you work to eat. You got to work to live the life you're living now, regardless of what it is. If you're poor, you got to work to fund your poorness. If you're rich, you got to work to fund your richness. But while you work where you are, you're also working toward your vision. And here's what I want you to hear. People tend to give up when they don't see a

path that goes straight from where they are to straight to having the vision accomplished. Most people get discouraged because they have greatly underestimated what it takes to live the life they want to live.

In fact, I've heard people say it like this, that we overestimate what we can do in a year. We underestimate what we can do in a decade. I know, because I call my preacher buddies and I say, "Well, I'm frustrated." And they say, "Why?" I said, "I didn't have 4,000 in attendance this week." Well, y'all didn't laugh like y'all thought we should have 4,000 in attendance this week. There's numbers. Listen, the next big number for us to hit as a church is 150. It ain't 10,000. If I had 10,000 people show up, you know what I'm going to do? Probably go into cardiac arrest, folks.

I'm not going to know what to do with these people. That's too many. I don't have the building for that. Amen. I'm going to start calling tent people too. Y'all got — how many tents do you have right now? Yes, we'll take the little camping tents. That can be our nursery. Amen. And so, no, but there's a reasonable growth pattern that you follow. And so you can't get discouraged because you don't see a straight path. Jocelyn just went with Saraland's marching band up to New York City. And she told me the other day, she said that parade in New York was way easier than the Mardi Gras parade.

And I said, "Why?" She said, "Because it was a straight road." She said that Mardi Gras parade, "We didn't know where we were going. We kept having to twist and turn and didn't know what's happening." She said it was a straight road. It was super easy. Well, folks, I just need you to hear this. There is no straight road to the life that you want to live, to the vision you want to accomplish and the wealth you want to build. It is an uphill battle. It's going to be work. You're going to face trials. You're going to face difficulty. Sometimes you're going to get broke on the way to having money.

Amen. I'm not declaring any bankruptcy over anybody, but some of you will have to cut back at some point. You're going to have to buy that off brand bread. I mean, you have to buy the cereal in a bag at some point on your way there. You're going to have to do what you got to do. You can get the soup with the all white can. Amen. You're going to have to do something on the way there. It's not all going to be up into the right, but I promise you, you can get there if you don't get discouraged, but you've got to take massive action. And in the Pentecostal church — which I just had somebody get on one of our posts online and tell me how ugly it was that I was talking about other denominations this way.

When I was talking about Pentecostal churches — lady, we're a Pentecostal church. We believe in the Holy Ghost and his power. Amen. Don't leave no ugly comments. I'll talk about you in a sermon. Amen. Everybody say shame, shame. That's right. We coming for you. I don't know this. We've just ruined this lady's week. I don't know. She'll never see it again. No, she won't see it. I'm just playing around. I'm just kidding. We do love you. Come to church here, please. We're full of the Holy Ghost and power. It's not their fault. They got a funny pastor. It's not their fault. But in the Pentecostal church, we do have a tendency.

Pastor John, you've seen this over the years. We tend to confuse what we do need to work for and what we don't have to work for. We have a tendency to work towards, in the Pentecostal church, all the things that have already been provided at the cross. We trying to stay saved and Jesus is like, "I got you." We constantly going through this stuff, constant condemnation over us all the time. Weeping at the altar. I mean, we're more Catholic than we are evangelical sometimes, because some of us be coming to the altar to get saved every week. Honey, you're saved.

You believe in once saved, always saved. I just believe you're more saved than you might think you are. Amen. So we'll work for the stuff that's already accomplished. And then on the flip side of it, we won't do anything for the stuff we actually have to work for. And it's like we believe that it's just going to float in on a supernatural cloud. And listen, I listen to the same TV preacher some of y'all listen to, and I want you to know this, how they make it sound. I was listening to a

TV preacher the other day who made it just sound like, "I just believe God and everything's going to work out." Folks, I'm telling you, I'm not coming to y'all with just the Bible. I got some life experience on this. That ain't how it goes. When they tell you that's how it goes, that ain't how it goes. They lie to you. When they say that stuff, you are going to have to put the effort in. You're going to have to work for some of this stuff. If you want the life you want to live, you're going to have to do something. Jesus came to give you life and life to the full. So I say, why don't you take hold of it and set after it and do what it takes to have it, in Jesus' name?

Somebody give him praise right there. Before I tell that lady on the internet off again. Hallelujah. There's a power to working. There's a power to working it out. It's good for you. The Bible says this in Proverbs chapter 13. It says, "Wealth gained hastily will dwindle." We want a supernatural lottery ticket. I believe in prosperity. I believe in prosperity by the plow. You got to put your hand to the plow. But this is what it says. It says, "But whoever gathers little by little will increase it." Every level of wealth is a test.

> **PROVERBS 13:11** ESV
>
> [11] Wealth gained hastily will dwindle, but whoever gathers little by little will increase it.

And some of you are stuck at the level of income that you have because you keep failing the test.

You keep failing the test. You've got to pass the test. You've got to pass. And you go, "Well, we just don't have as much money as we used to." Well, folks, welcome to 2026. I mean, you know, you can't judge 2026 money off of 2018 money. In 2018, you know, they were giving eggs away for free at the grocery store. I think they would give you six dozen of them for free. I don't know, but I know now they cost, you know, a light bill payment, and you got to show them your social security card to get eggs. Eggs are expensive right now. Do you know you can get free eggs?

You can already prosper here. Did you know that? And this ain't an Easter joke. We've got an egg plug right here in the church. Yeah. If you're thankful for your eggs, why don't you just give a little hand clap of appreciation real quick? She tucking her head down. So I ain't going to point her out. I think she might not have come with any. They broke getting into the car this morning. Amen. So today's the day he's talking about it. Oh God. Hallelujah. No, I'm serious. You have to work towards it. You got to work on it. You have to move in that direction.

You have to pass the test. If your money's going down, you got to repass the test. There are moments you got to get recertified in any profession. And if your budget's going down, you got to get recertified. You got to get recertified with the amount of money that's coming in for you. Get on a budget, make that money know who's boss, tell it who's in charge. And then you'll be able to start moving forward, but you got to work for it. You got to take massive action. Some of y'all need to go home today. And you just need to say, "I'm not leaving this kitchen table until I have a budget."

Some of you need to go home today and you need to lock yourself in a closet. And you need to say, "I'm not coming out of here until I have a vision for my life." Some of you need to go home today and you need to decide. You need to make the decision. And I don't like saying it this way, because it sounds like I'm trying to do something. I'm really not. I'm trying to help you. But you need to go home. So what do I need to sow? What do I need to give? What is the next step in my generosity journey? And you got to figure that thing out. And when you do, I'm telling you, if you'll just go home and do the homework, God will do a great work in your life.

I promise you, folks, you can have more than you ever thought you could have. I don't dream that we're ever going to have a church where everybody's got a yacht and everybody's got a limo and everybody's got a plane. That's not going

to happen. But I do believe this. This can be the church that people in this area start to see a pattern, that everybody that goes to that white church over there — which I got to be careful saying that on the Internet. Amen. But it's an all white building, big white brick building. And the people that go to that all white church over there, hallelujah, when they go — everybody that goes over there seems to be living above the standard of life here in Saraland, Alabama.

Somehow those people always seem to be fine. I always see people turning around and paying for other people's groceries. I always see people — their cars always looks clean. It always looks nice. These people always seem to have. I don't ever hear these people talking about having money problems. You know, I know three people from that church that have helped X, Y and Z in this city, and they've made things better. I'm telling you, we can see God do a great work in your life. Oh, my God, I just feel like there's going to be a blessing pour out on this church.

Y'all signed up for an honest preacher and you got one. You take these four things home with you today. That's the close. There ain't no anointing for wealth that's going to get put on you today. But if you sow a seed of ten thousand dollars, the next five people — amen. No, there is no supernatural breakthrough at the end of the service here. In fact, I hope some of y'all have just started to realize that 90 percent of what we do, there's no supernatural breakthrough at the end of any of these messages other than you take it and you make a decision.

I can tell you this, I'm confident beyond a shadow of a doubt that I'm preaching stuff that is life changing, because my life has been changed with the stuff I've been preaching since I've been here. We are hard and heavy after the real true power of God, and I believe it can unlock even in your finances. So here's your homework. You either need to go home and get a vision, you need to go home and get on a budget, you need to go home and figure out what you're going to sow, or you need to go home and you need to stop being a little baby and take massive action.

And I want you to know I'm going to close with this. I have found over the years dealing with a lot of people who want to accomplish more in life, and I've dealt with people who have accomplished more. I've dealt with people who dream a lot, but don't get anything done. I've done coaching. Me and Ashleigh interface with a lot of different personalities, and I have learned this, that people who always have something come up that stops them — which by the way is most people. In our churches, we would tend to say that that is opposition, that there's some kind of spiritual warfare that's stopping me from doing stuff.

But I need you to hear me. If you always have stuff come up that stops you, this might be the breakthrough word for you this morning. If you always have stuff comes up that stops you, that is not spiritual warfare, it is self-sabotage. Your system is designed, your nervous system is designed to protect you from danger. So anytime you go to do something that's going to require more of you, that's going to be more difficult than you've done in the past, or that requires you to put yourself in a position where you may fail, your nervous system naturally tells you that you are in danger and you need to stop.

When it says that, it becomes hyper aware of things that need to be done. And the next thing you know, the reason you've never gone to the next level in your life is because you just have become super anal about making sure that the dishes are done every night. But the dishwasher is not as big of a deal as you go into the next level in your life. In fact, there was a time when we were kind of crossing some borders. We started saying this around the house: I don't get paid to clean the kitchen. Sometimes kitchen's got to be dirty for a week or two, so you can cross over your threshold.

You keep finding things that are stopping you. There's always something. Well, there's something with the car, there's something with the kids, there's something with the house, there's something with... No, that's self-sabotage. And if you will look every obstacle in the face and just tell it, "Hey, in Jesus' name, you're important, but you're not that important.

I'm about to go do what I'm called to do. And I'm going to take my life to the next level." Don't let that stuff stop you. That's how you take massive action. That's how you cross over your threshold.

I don't know who needed to hear that this morning, but that self-sabotage thing is real. Some of y'all are looking at me like this is the greatest message you've ever heard. And some of y'all are looking at me like, "Are you going to preach the Bible at all today?" I just preached a lot of Bible to you and you didn't even know it, in Jesus' name. Amen. Come on. If you received the word this morning, give the Lord a hand clap of praise. Hallelujah.

02

Preaching Notes

Before You Preach

This message is part of teaching on the church value “We’re passionate about giving generously.” It follows a message on the supernatural side of sowing: tithing, sowing and giving, naming your seed and your soil by faith, and the four laws of sowing and reaping. This week turns to the natural, practical side of building wealth.

Be upfront about the tone. When this subject comes up, the pastor gets direct, more coach than preacher. Say plainly that you are not raising money: you are trying to put money in people’s pockets. And say at the start what you will say at the end: there is no anointing for wealth handed out at the close. There is homework.

Expect two kinds of pushback: people who think wanting more is unspiritual, and people who want a supernatural shortcut. The message answers both.

Introduction

> **1 CHRONICLES 4:9-10** ESV
>
> 9 Jabez was more honorable than his brothers; and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, “Because I bore him in pain.” 10 Jabez called upon the God of Israel, saying, “Oh that you would bless me and enlarge my border, and that your hand might be with me, and that you would keep me from harm so that it might not bring me pain!” And God granted what he asked.

Jabez prayed a prayer the average churchgoer would call selfish: “Oh that you would bless me and enlarge my border” (1 Chronicles 4:10). Someone probably told him, “God ain’t no genie in a bottle.” Nobody said He was. He is God who came in the flesh and died on a cross so that we might have eternal life and life to the full. And God granted what Jabez asked.

“He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?” (Romans 8:32). All things means all things: power, healing, wholeness, a saved family, and yes, your finances.

Personal testimony: God touched our finances after we stepped away from full-time ministry, completely apart from anything the church gave. That keeps the preaching honest. A preacher who does not need your money can tell you the truth, from the pulpit and from everyday life in business.

WEALTH AND LIFESTYLE ARE INTERTWINED

Today is about building your wealth, and that is the same conversation as living the life you want to live. When your wealth changes, your lifestyle changes. If it goes down, it changes by necessity. (You have not felt it until you buy off-brand bread.)

You Can Have More in Life

1. Do not let the church beat it out of you. The church has a tendency to make people feel they need to be broke, busted and disgusted for God to be happy with them. That is not true.

Money will not turn you into a depraved sinner. If something is already in your heart, money only gives it a way out. Jesus taught that what defiles a person comes "out of the heart" (Matthew 15:18-19). Poor people can do crazy things, too.

There is no ethic to money. Money has no ethic. It is just a tool.

2. Do not let the area beat it out of you. Where you come from can make you comfortable with a lesser life and with things that should never be accepted, like letting a family member with destructive behavior stay around your children because "blood is thicker than water." That is not in the Bible. The only blood that matters is the blood of Jesus Christ. Do not settle for less because less is around you.

Prosperity Is Birthed Out of Pain

Jabez was named for pain: "his mother called his name Jabez, saying, 'Because I bore him in pain'" (1 Chronicles 4:9). Prosperity of any kind comes out of pain, too.

Some prosperity preaching makes life sound like nothing but good, good, good. That is not true. You will go through something on the way to where you want to be.

- "It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn your statutes" (Psalm 119:71).
- "After you have suffered a little while," God "will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you" (1 Peter 5:10).

Difficulty is the price of being trusted with increase. If you have never been through anything and you suddenly have more money than anyone in your family ever had, you cannot be trusted with it.

Sometimes the pain is extreme: abuse or abandonment that makes a person say, "I'm not going to live this way anymore." Sometimes it is a light affliction, and you never know which it will be.

Illustration: my father. My dad was an alcoholic, and he was abusive. I called the police on him twice so we could live safely in the house: once after he broke my mother's nose, and once when he pulled a gun on me. Neither got his attention. A bad drunk-driving wreck when I was in high school did not get his attention. Then one day, picking up his paycheck in downtown Birmingham, where he was a firefighter, he barely tapped another car

while parking. It frightened him so badly that he got sober, and he stayed sober for the last 10 or 15 years of his life. Sometimes it is a very light pain that finally drives the change.

Either way, you have to make a decision and take action toward the life you want. **Without pain, you will never make the decision.** Most of us know we need to get in shape. We just do not hurt enough yet.

Today: **four things you must do if you want to build your wealth and live the life you desire.** Write them down. Some will sound simple. They will change your life.

1. Develop a Vision for Your Life

People reject the idea of vision for one of two reasons. It sounds too lofty, or it sounds like woo-woo nonsense. **Having a vision for your life won't change anything, but without it, you can't change anything.**

Vision is practical. It is setting the heading for your life, the way a ship's navigator sets a heading. Ask yourself:

- What do you want to do?
- Where do you want to go?
- What do you want your life to look like and feel like?

Vision becomes the ruler every decision is measured against. If your vision is to be a doctor, building things in the shop is great, but it will not make you one.

Personal example: The Lord called me to ministry early, so I built my high school years around it: choir, band, and a mass communications class editing video, which turned out to matter a great deal once everything in church went to video. As a teenager I wrote charts for a band I did not have. I led worship only about five times before becoming a music pastor. That is the power of vision.

REVERSE ENGINEER IT

Once you know where you are going, you can work backward. If you want to be a doctor, a ballet major is the wrong road. What skills do you need? What do you need to accomplish, and by when? What do you have to become to realize the vision?

> **NEHEMIAH 6:10-11** ESV
>
> 10 Now when I went into the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah, son of Mehetabel, who was confined to his home, he said, "Let us meet together in the house of God, within the temple. Let us close the doors of the temple, for they are coming to kill you. They are coming to kill you by night." 11 But I said, "Should such a man as I run away? And what man such as I could go into the temple and live? I will not go in."

Nehemiah was rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem, and his enemies tried to frighten him into hiding in the temple. His answer becomes our filter: "Should such a man as I run away?" (Nehemiah 6:11).

When you have a vision, every decision gets measured by that question. Should a man such as I do this? Should a woman such as I? It shapes what you say, what you do, and, for young people, who you date. Do not date losers.

It is never too late to develop a vision for your life. We have seen people at 35, 50 and 60, from good families and bad, through good marriages and broken ones, get a vision and change their trajectory. God can do a great work in your life if you will participate with Him in the process.

2. Get on a Written Budget

You cannot spend more than you make and get wealthy. "You cannot serve God and money" (Matthew 6:24). **Money makes a terrible master, but it makes a wonderful servant.**

You show money who is boss by deciding where it will go before you ever consult it. When you decide at the checkout line, your wallet is making the decision. Make the decision on paper first, and if you are smart, involve the Holy Spirit. That keeps money your servant.

Every person ought to have two budgets.

Budget one: the budget that controls the money you have. Everybody has something to budget, even if it is $11.18. A great resource is Dave Ramsey's *The Total Money Makeover*. Following that plan, we paid off $63,801.99 of debt in six months.

Budget two: the budget your vision requires. Many people get a vision and never find out what it costs. You want the seven-bedroom house with the double-size pool, but you have never priced it. You want to travel the world, but you do not know what a ticket to Atlanta costs. Call this a **faith budget**. It is the most fun money you will ever spend, because you do not have to spend it yet.

- It makes you count the cost. You may find a three-bedroom house suits you just fine.
- Without it, any amount of money sounds arbitrary. Say "$10,000 a month," and half the room hears a fortune and the other half wonders how anyone lives on it.
- Remember taxes. A large share of a high income goes to taxes, so plan with what you actually keep.
- People around you will think you can do anything once you make a little more than they do. All money has limits.

The faith budget feeds back into your vision. You revisit the vision, adjust, and keep reverse engineering.

3. You Go Where You Sow

The previous message covered the supernatural effect of sowing financial seed into the kingdom. There is also a natural effect.

> MATTHEW 6:21 ESV
>
> [21] For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Sowing turns your heart toward what you sow into. Sow into missions and you will want missionaries to succeed. Sow into the house of the Lord and your heart turns toward getting your family into the house of the Lord. **Vision is the heading. Sowing is the rudder.**

Illustration: the computer. Years ago I had an online ministry but could not produce videos fast enough. A friend who is a pastor could turn out videos left and right. I bought him a brand-new computer and named the seed: my own productivity in making videos. Over the next three months I made more than 100 videos, up from about four a month. I sowed in a direction, and my life went in that direction.

WHAT SIZE SHOULD YOUR SEED BE?

Your vision and your faith budget tell you. Review the four laws of sowing and reaping: you reap **what** you sow, **where** you sow, **more** than you sow, and **after** you sow. "Whatever one sows, that will he also reap" (Galatians 6:7).

A seed produces after its likeness, and there is a quantity factor, too. No one can set the size of your seed for you, and we will never run a service that says five people need to give $10,000 for a miracle. But if you have a $1 million vision, a $10 seed in the bucket is not in the likeness of it. If you need $70 to get through the week, $7 might be the seed. **Anybody can show up and tip God, but when we sow, we have to sow in a way that we feel it.**

Ashleigh put it this way in a training: if you work at a 10, you will get paid at a 10. If you work at a 3, you will get paid at a 3, and you cannot work at a 3 and be upset you are not paid at a 10. You cannot sow at a 3 and be upset you are not reaping at a 10. That law works in every area of life, including how you treat your spouse.

"But isn't God big enough to multiply a small seed into anything?" Expecting a tiny seed to produce a giant harvest is not the Bible. That is Jack and the Beanstalk.

4. Take Massive Action

You are designed to work.

> GENESIS 2:15 ESV
>
> [15] The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.

This is before the fall. In a perfect world, Adam was given work. Work is design, not curse. And you work to eat: "If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat" (2 Thessalonians 3:10). You work to fund the life you are living now, and at the same time you work toward your vision.

THERE IS NO STRAIGHT ROAD

People give up when they do not see a straight path from where they are to the vision accomplished. They underestimate what it takes. It has been said that we overestimate what we can do in a year and underestimate what we can do in a decade. Follow a reasonable growth pattern. (For our church, the next big number is 150, not 10,000.)

Illustration: the parade. My daughter marched with the Saraland band in a parade in New York City and said it was much easier than Mardi Gras. Why? "Because it was a straight road." Mardi Gras twisted and turned. **There is no straight road to the life you want to live, the vision you want to accomplish and the wealth you want to build.** It is uphill. Sometimes you will go without on the way to having more: off-brand bread and cereal in a bag. Do not get discouraged.

WORK FOR THE RIGHT THINGS

In the Pentecostal church we tend to get this backward. We work for what Jesus already accomplished at the cross, coming to the altar to get saved again every week, and then we will not work for the things that actually require effort, as if they will float in on a cloud. Some television preachers make it sound like you just believe God and everything works out. That is not how it goes. Jesus came so that you "may have life and have it abundantly" (John 10:10). Take hold of it, and do what it takes.

> PROVERBS 13:11 ESV
>
> [11] Wealth gained hastily will dwindle, but whoever gathers little by little will increase it.

We want a supernatural lottery ticket. Believe in prosperity by the plow: put your hand to the plow. **Every level of wealth is a test**, and some people stay stuck at a level of income because they keep failing it. If your income goes down, you have to get recertified: get on a budget, tell your money who is boss, and move forward.

Conclusion

You can have more than you ever thought you could have. Not a church where everybody has a yacht and a plane, but a church where the community notices a pattern: the people who go there seem to be living above the standard of life around them. They pay for strangers' groceries. They help people across the city.

There is no anointing for wealth handed out at the end of this message. Here is the homework:

- Go home and **get a vision**. Lock yourself in a closet if you have to.
- Go home and **get on a budget**. Do not leave the kitchen table until you have one.
- Go home and **decide what to sow**. What is the next step in your generosity journey?
- Go home and **take massive action.**

SELF-SABOTAGE, NOT SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Close with this. People who always have something come up that stops them, which is most people, tend to call it opposition or spiritual warfare. **If you always have stuff come up that stops you, that is not spiritual warfare. It is self-sabotage.**

Your nervous system is designed to protect you from danger. When you go to do something that requires more of you, or where you might fail, it tells you to stop, and suddenly the dishes, the car, the kids and the house all seem urgent. Sometimes the kitchen has to stay dirty for a week or two so you can cross your threshold.

Look every obstacle in the face and say, "In Jesus' name, you're important, but you're not that important. I'm about to go do what I'm called to do." That is how you take massive action.

If you receive the Word today, give the Lord a hand clap of praise.

03

Scripture List

Every passage read, cited or alluded to in the message, in the order it comes up.

Read

Read aloud in the message.

1 CHRONICLES 4:9-10	9 Jabez was more honorable than his brothers; and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, “Because I bore him in pain.” 10 Jabez called upon the God of Israel, saying, “Oh that you would bless me and enlarge my border, and that your hand might be with me, and that you would keep me from harm so that it might not bring me pain!” And God granted what he asked.
NEHEMIAH 6:10-11	10 Now when I went into the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah, son of Mehetabel, who was confined to his home, he said, “Let us meet together in the house of God, within the temple. Let us close the doors of the temple, for they are coming to kill you. They are coming to kill you by night.” 11 But I said, “Should such a man as I run away? And what man such as I could go into the temple and live? I will not go in.”

Cited

Named or quoted along the way.

ROMANS 8:32	32 He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?
PSALM 119:71	71 It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn your statutes.
1 PETER 5:10	10 And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.
MATTHEW 6:24	24 “No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.

MATTHEW 6:21	21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.
GENESIS 2:15	15 The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.
2 THESSALONIANS 3:10	10 For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat.
PROVERBS 13:11	11 Wealth gained hastily will dwindle, but whoever gathers little by little will increase it.

Alluded to

Drawn on without naming the reference.

HEBREWS 1:2	2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.
JOHN 10:10	10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.
MATTHEW 15:18–19	18 But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. 19 For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander.
GALATIANS 6:7	7 Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.

Pastor Jason Mayfield

SENIOR PASTOR, CITYLIGHT CHURCH

Pastor Jason Mayfield is the Senior Pastor of Citylight Church in Saraland, Alabama, where he and his wife, Ashleigh, lead a church devoted to Building Lives on Jesus. His preaching is rooted in the Bible, full of hope, and grounded in one conviction: an incredible life is built on the finished work of Jesus Christ.

For more than 20 years, Pastor Jason has given his life to the local church. He has been credentialed with the Assemblies of God for 21 years and ordained for 14, and he has led revitalization in churches that went on to rank among the Top 100 Fastest-Growing Churches in America. He carries a deep conviction that the church can be both excellent and supernatural, and a passion for revival.

He is an author and the creator of Tear Up Your Bible and POWER 27, a daily rhythm of Bible reading, prayer and worship. His resources have helped more than 100,000 people go deeper in the Scriptures. Above every title, his greatest joy is seeing people meet Jesus, be filled with the Spirit, and grow into everything God has called them to be.

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