

Scripture Reference: Ephesians 6:10 (NKJV); Ephesians 6:18-20 (NKJV)

I'm so glad you could join me on this first Sunday of 2022. Ordinarily, my life really is a continuous flow of things that God is speaking, and God is saying at any given moment in time. It doesn't require a Christmas or a New Year's service, it doesn't require a calendar for me or for Pastor Sharon; the way that we just flow with God in the ministry, we prefer to rather speak what He wants us to speak rather than flow with the timings and the events of men.

However, over the years, we have learnt and we have discovered that there is a human element that comes into this equation and somehow people seem to raise their expectation, they seem to raise their reach in their spirit and their soul that because the calendar is about to change, and they have these times of thoughtfulness and meditation and thinking and they have a bit of introspection. People have a tendency to look backwards, in a time like when there is a New Year coming or a significant moment, they tend to look backwards and evaluate what the past has been and most often there is a kind of a resolve, that is why they call it a new year's resolution, a resolve or some kind of a hope, some kind of an expectation rises up inside of them that the future is going to be different, it's going to be better, it's going to have more opportunities. I say, that is all good, that's all great, it's an amazing opportunity to raise your hope and your expectation.

We do find that because people have raised their expectation, they've raised their hope, they're kind of meditative, they're introspective and often they are kind of, "Is God saying something for me? Is there something that God is going to say to me?" Maybe for yourself, in your own time with God, or "Is there something that God is saying to the broader body of Christ that includes me?"

There is an expectation that rises. You and I both know by now, being in Heritage of Faith, we both know that when you have hope, when you have expectation, when you have an increased intensity, desire, for something then that is a good space for God to come and speak into. Even though we flow through the year, even though we flow with the Word of God; *I Will Take The Children, Big and Bold and the Resurrection of Christ*, the Power and the Resurrection of Christ. Those kinds of messages that God has for us, we do it in His time, not in calendar time.

Once again, we find ourselves where there is a heightened expectation, and I find God coming and occupying this space and putting things in our mouths, in our spirit and ministering to His people.

So, as we go into 2022 I fully expect that God is going to do some amazing things. So, one of the things that He has told me, some months ago already, that 2022 will be a Version 2 of Big and Bold. So, Big and Bold Version 2 in 2022, which means the things that we did that were big and bold in 2021, we must raise our expectations, we must raise our desires, we must raise our faith levels. We must raise... we must

set our sights higher on what God is going to do. It could look different to what, it almost certainly will look different to what it looked like in 2021. Because God is always doing different things and touching different areas in our lives.

I want to read you a scripture and it is in Ephesians chapter 6:10, ¹⁰ **Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. (Ephesians 6:10 NKJV).**

One of the things that the Lord has been speaking to my heart in the last couple of weeks actually, as the year has been coming to a close, the calendar year, and the natural course of December coming here in the Southern Hemisphere and South Africa in particular. We know that this is a time where a lot of people go on vacation, they travel across the border into Southern Africa because they work here, they go visit their families. There is a lot of activity and movement out of the major centres and then for a while there is a holiday time or a visitation time of family and then there is a migration back into the major centers of South Africa.

And uh, one of the things... and you begin to hear people's language often. And it's like when the year end is coming, "We can't wait for holiday. It's just, yoh, it's time, I mean we've had quite a year. Like, I don't know if I could have waited one more week. I need a holiday."

Well, what is that an indication of? When people talk like that, what are they indicating? They are actually just saying I am running out of strength. I'm running out of intensity. I'm running out of capacity. I'm running out of capability, perhaps, not in the sense you're not capable but because of capacity and a lack of strength perhaps, it's like you're holding on, holding on, until that time comes.

Well, first I want to say is that if you speak those words, then that's what happens to your strength. Your words actually start to drain your strength. And your words begin to minimize your strength. And one of the things the Lord has giving and increasing in my spirit for 2022 and part of the Version 2 for '22 for Big and Bold is to speak out strength and to speak out to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might, be strong. Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. I am looking for strength in 2022. I am looking to be strong in the Lord, my strength in the Lord and what the Lord can do is really where I am going to draw my boldness and my courage from, is to be strong in the Lord, to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. In other words there are some things I know that God is going to do in 2022, that are going to require strength; my natural human strength, but it is my spiritual strength, my joy strength, my peace strength, my hope strength, my faith strength, the love of God strength that kindness, gentleness, perseverance, steadfastness, the fruit of the spirit strength that is going to be required in my spirit being and I am already speaking and you can already sense this, I am already speaking strength into myself.

I don't want to go through this season that is ahead, this Christmas season and New Years season and be speaking well. "I'm just going to make it, ah I'm not sure, okay phew I've had a bit of a rest I can go on now." I am not taking that particular

perspective. God has already got me activated to do things for Him over this period of time that is already supernatural and divine. God is using this time where people move and families come together. God is already using this time with me to be able to be His messenger, to be His hands, to be available to Him to use in other people's lives.

Under normal circumstances this would be a time where Pastor Sharon and I would oftentimes, just in many ways retreat into our space, we would spend a lot of time talking to each other, sharing with each other, just resting, sleeping, doing some exercises. As a general rule for December we do not like to travel to, away from home, we find the traffic is a lot, we find that actually it is a lot more quiet in town than it is in holiday, coastal resort areas, so we have a tendency to just be at home and enjoy our space and be at peace. But in this season the Lord God has us actually on assignment and He has got us working and so how do I get it done? Well, I am strong in the Lord and I have the power of His might working in me, in me and for me and with me. And I am surging into 2022. I am not waiting for the surge and the strength of God, just waiting for my body to catch up, I am surging.

So, then you might say to me, well Pastor John what about rest? I will take my rest, I will have times when I go away for two or three days or I'll just rest for two or three days and I'll have moments here and moments there, I certainly will do that. Revitalize my physical body strength and have time alone with Pastor Sharon because we need that, that fellowship that intimacy, that thing that we need to be us, to be our strength together, our joy together, our sharing together with my family if they are around and we can spend some time together, I certainly will do that but I want you to know that I am surging into 2022, I'm already surging from 2021 into 2022 and God has done that in my spirit, He has energised me already in my spirit and so I look forward to what 2022 has for us because I have this surge and you are going to hear me speaking a lot about it.

I have this surge that God is going to restore peoples' relationship with Him, God Himself, He is going to restore that relationship. He is going to bring us up to a higher level in our walk with Him in a way that we are obeying Him, that He can use us and our discipleship. I am aware that actually He is going to do, and hear me now when I say this, He is going to do major, major work on relationships. He is going to do major work on relationships between husbands and wives, between fathers and mothers and children, between siblings, between different family members, God is going to do a major thing and He is going to bring them together under His mantle of knowing Him and there's going to be a restoration and those that have got good relationships, God is going to bring them closer. They are going to get better, they're going to be bigger, they're going to get stronger, they're going to flow together, they're going to be energised to do kingdom of God work together.

God is going to do a major restoration in relationships in 2022. It's, and as I have been asking the Lord about it, and say Lord, why is relationships so big on my heart? And He began to say to me, because this virus has been a violation of My Word and a violation of what I stand for. I stand for relationships and I am the ultimate relationship God. God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are three in one. There is no

separating them. They are unified, they are in a relationship in such unity and intimacy and complete agreement, there is no division between them, there is no separating them, completely united and completely compatible and they are completely in unison with each other. They are the ultimate relationship example for us to follow as believers and so Jesus often spoke, if you read, particularly in the book of John, Jesus often spoke, "Live in Me as I live in the Father", and "As I am united with the Father, so you will be with Me and with the Father" and He is very strong about the relationship component that He talks to His disciples, "Abide in Me and I will abide in you. Just as I abide in the Father and He abides in you and you in Me and He in us." And He's strong and abiding and He's strong on relationships and He's strong on connecting.

I know that as we go into *Big and Bold, Version 2, 2022*, I know that one of the things that's going to happen is that the relationship component is going to produce a level of productivity that we haven't been able to touch before. Because creativity comes from unity. The Spirit of God - words are spoken, words are spoken that God wants to speak when you're in that space of unity and in that space of relationship where you are supporting each other; you're agreeing with each other; you're connecting with each other. You can collaborate and partner with ideas, with energies, with concepts, with all manner of new things that God wants to bring into our lives to release our giftings, release our assignments, and release us into productivity for the Kingdom of God. As we are released into those things, I'm more convinced now than ever before, but the Word of God is true on this – the resources just pour into our hands. Resources come to us because we are completely, completely focused on the relationship component.

For 2022, I'm starting off by just speaking about *be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might*. And if you want to have a declaration, a confession that you want to start to make before we get to see each other again, I would say, say your name. Say,

- John, I'm strong in the Lord.
- John, I'm strengthened with mighty power in the inner man.
- I'm strong in the Lord and I have the power of His might working in me.
- I'm strong. I'm strong in 2022.
- I'm strong in Him.
- I have His might in me.
- I have His power in me.
- I'm ready for everything that He's got in me.
- I'm equal to anything and I'm ready for everything that He has got for me and for us in 2022.

The other thing I want to say right off the bat about 2022 is that, part of the way that our relationship is going to go to a new level with God, is that He is going to actually call us to do more praying. He is going to call us to do more praying. You say, "But Pastor John, we are already a praying church. How can we do more praying?" Well, I think we are going to be led by Him and His execution of how this is going to happen, it's going to be something that is going to be marvelous to behold. I have seen some things in my spirit. I've seen us coming together in large numbers of

people and I have seen in my spirit, I have seen that we are going to have extended prayer time where there will be prayer and then there will be a mixture of sharing the Word and then more praying.

The sharing of what God wants to do and more praying and, and they're not, that's not going to happen every week but it's going to happen as God leads us to do it. And but it's going to cause a surge, it's going to cause a surge of spiritual energy to happen. Bearing in mind that when you are praying you are talking to God, you are speaking what God wants to speak. He is present when we speak what He speaks and so what's happening when you pray is the relationship with Him is getting stronger, it has that, it has that thing I'm strong in the Lord and I've got mighty power in the inner man as you pray.

So, it is part of the reason why Jude verse 20 says; that we raise ourselves up in our faith, as we pray in the spirit. We, our faith becomes strong and it "rises higher and higher like a mighty edifice" is what the Amplified Bible says as you pray in the spirit. Well, why is that; because as you pray in the spirit you have to connect your faith and your faith is energized; as you pray and as you pray, your faith is energized and your faith needs to be activated to pray in the spirit. So you, just the two just grow together, you are going to grow in God in 2022.

So, this is consistently something God is always working on and it's the reason why I minister like this, when I talk about relationships. If you want to have a good relationship you've got to close the gap, you can't have relationship with a wide gap between you and the person you have a relationship with. So, then you could call it an acquaintance or if it's a family member you could say; we are family but we don't really have fellowship, we don't really have relationships, we don't really have times where we build together. It is an interesting thing and a phenomenon actually that people have this bloodline issue with family because we're born from the same parent but in actual fact they have no relationship they have no fellowship they spend very little time together and so the fact that they have they share the same parents, uh, it becomes the most important thing. No, the most important is your walk with God.

So, then you are identifying that the blood-bought life that you have and the blood-bought family that you're in must have a very, very, very high priority in your life. And so God is always wanting to close the gap. He wants to close the gap between us and Him and the corporate body of Jesus Christ, the corporate body and Him and He wants this to happen. This is big on His agenda. So, what's happened in the previous two years is Coronavirus and all the different variants of the virus that have been coming through what's been happening with them is that it's been separating people, it's been keeping things in front of our mouths so that we can't speak to each other and we can't see each other and we can't engage with each other like we used to. It's violated that opportunity to engage.

In fact, everything about Covid is to separate, to stay away from getting too close to people, because you might be contagious. I want to tell you that in 2022 I believe God is going to get so close to you that a contagious breaking out of the love of God

is going to start rising up in your spirit. And if there is a contagious virus if you want to call it that, if there is a contagious countermeasure to the virus, there is a contagious move that is going to happen in 2022 it is going to be the contagious move of the love of God; it's going to be the contagious move of intimacy with God. And you watch that the Holy Spirit is going to come and dwell amongst us, He is going to be touching you in your house, He is going to be touching you in your workspace, He is going to be touching you wherever you go. You are going to feel and know and be aware that God is calling and He is coming upon us, and He is coming around us – because what the enemy has tried to steal, He is going to restore the things that the enemy has stolen from the body of Christ in the last 24 months.

And so I speak this already for 2022, that relationship is going to be a big part of what God is going to do. Praying more and having surges of prayer, dynamic effective power praying whereas a body of Christ we already know we are in agreement together. We already know as we have been studying the Word together, we have this unity. We have this agreement, we have this understanding of the power of Ecclesia. God is going to use it in 2022. He is going to bring us together for surges of intimacy with Him and have us speak out His will in the earth. It is going to be an amazing thing that God is going to do. And so, it is already happening to me, but I thank you in 2021 for praying for me, I thank you for praying for Brother Jerry. I thank you for spending time every week in your homes, in your day, thank you for praying for the government, and for the body of Christ, for Heritage of Faith – for all of the leaders in Heritage of Faith; Brother Jerry, me, Pastor Sharon and the spiritual leaders in the family in the ministry. Thank you for praying for us. Thank you that you have made yourself available and God has answered – He's answered in spectacular ways. Our year of 2021 has probably been one of our most accelerated, most dynamic, most productive years in a single 12-month period and I can say than almost any other period in our ministry. It has been quite phenomenal.

And so if we've got to raise our sights in 2022, and say that God is going to do bigger and bolder in 2022 – it is *Version 2* effectively in 2022. We're going to need the open hand of God with all of His abundance, with all of His strength, with all of His goodness that He has got for us. As Brother Jerry says, the open hand of God is stretched out towards us for those that are faithful and going to be doing His will and His work that is us. That is who we are, we are faithful, you might as well call us the faithful ones, you might as well label us as the praying ones, you might as well label us as the ones that praise and worship, we do it with sound and song. You might as well label us as those people that just we do the Word, we come together, we are strong in the Lord already and so I say in 2022, it is going to get better. Relationships are going to grow, there is going to be increase and development.

And I just want to close with this in verse 18, ¹⁸ **praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit**, and I urge you to do that already while you are away, it will refresh you it will not hinder you, **being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints**, those are the ones that are home and those are the ones that are on holiday ¹⁹ **and for me**, me and Pastor Sharon, **that utterance may be given to me**, that we may speak, **that I may open**

my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak. (Ephesians 6:18-20 NKJV)

Well, I am not in physical chains, but I am constrained by God and I am constrained for the work of God, to speak boldly and to speak out what God wants us to do and to go forth boldly in what God wants us to do in 2022. So, as you are away, as you are relaxing as you are out and about, please ponder this, please meditate on this, our next service I trust most of you will be back, back in town because God is going to lead us to be speaking more and more about the resurrection power in Christ, Christ resurrection power and how it pertains particularly in the way that God used the resurrection of Jesus Christ in the body to bring about all of His gifts that Jesus brought to the earth. To bring those gifts into the body of Christ and bring them as functioning, working powerful gifts, for us to live with and to operate with, and to function in and to be kingdom productive people while we are on the earth.

Wow, this is going to be a great year, thank you for listening to me, thank you for joining me on this service, may I just pray for you that if you are going to be travelling I ask the Holy Spirit, the Father, the angels, to take care of you, to protect you, to watch over you. No weapon formed against you will prosper, the blood of Jesus surrounds you and protects you, His angels are given charge over you and I pray that as you come back you will continue to think, you will continue to meditate on, you will continue to have conversations about being strong in the Lord and the power of His might, about the surges of prayer and drawing closer to God in 2022 than you have ever done before. Thank you for joining me, may His peace and may His protection and may His blessing and favour be upon you as we go forward. Bless you and thank you, in Jesus' name, amen.