

23 January 2021 Power of Resurrection Part 11: Relationships
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Scripture Reference: 1 Peter 3:18 (TPT); Ephesians 1:7 (NKJV); Psalm 42:7-11 (NKJV); Isaiah 21:6-10 (NKJV); Joel 2:32 (NKJV); Luke 4:18-19 (TPT); Jeremiah 23:29 (NKJV); John 14:1.6 (TPT); Ephesians 4:15-23 (NKJV); John 14:12-17 (TPT); John 15:1-5, 7-14 (TPT)

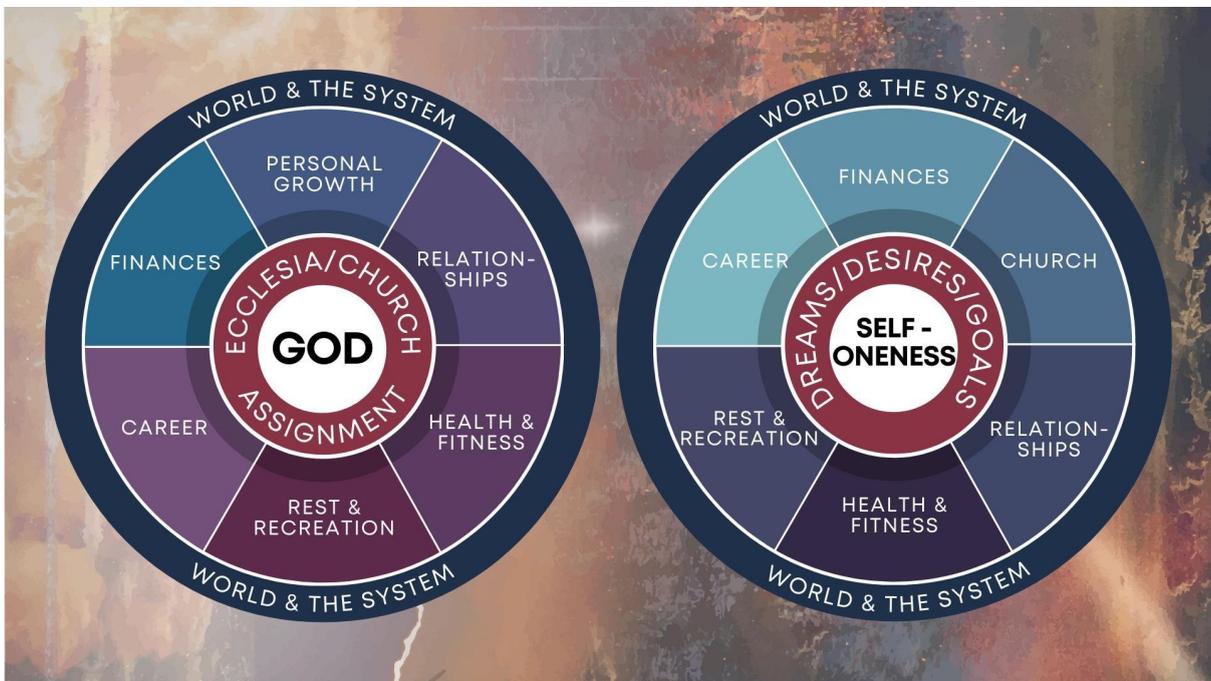
¹⁸... suffered and died for sins once and for all—the innocent for the guilty—to bring you near to God by his body being put to death (1 Peter 3:18 TPT). In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace (Ephesians 1:7 NKJV). Deep calls unto deep at the noise of Your waterfalls; All Your waves and billows have gone over me. The Lord will command His lovingkindness in the daytime, And in the night His song shall be with me. ⁹I will say to God my Rock, “Why have You forgotten me? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?” ¹⁰As with a breaking of my bones, My enemies reproach me, While they say to me all day long, “Where is your God?” ¹¹Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? (Two men in ‘perspex’ boxes on stage, both shouting, “Free me.”) **Hope in God; For I shall yet praise Him, The [j]help of my countenance and my God (Psalm 42:7-11 NKJV).**

⁶For thus has the Lord said to me: “Go, set a watchman, Let him declare what he sees.” ⁷And he saw a chariot with a pair of horsemen, A chariot of donkeys, and a chariot of camels, And he listened earnestly with great care. ⁸Then he cried, “A lion, my Lord! I stand continually on the watchtower in the daytime; I have sat at my post every night. ⁹And look, here comes a chariot of men with a pair of horsemen!” Then he answered and said, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen! (Two men in ‘perspex’ boxes on stage, only one shouting, “Free me.”) **And all the carved images of her gods He has broken to the ground.”** ¹⁰Oh, my threshing and the grain of my floor! That which I have heard from the Lord of hosts, The God of Israel, I have declared to you (Isaiah 21:6-10 NKJV). (Two men in ‘perspex’ boxes on stage, only one shouting, “Free me.”) ³²**And it shall come to pass That whoever calls on the name of the Lord Shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, As the Lord has said, Among the remnant whom the Lord calls (Joel 2:32 NKJV).**

Lord help me to get free from myself from my past, and all those things that caused confusion, fear and seem to keep crushing my dreams, my peace, and my hope, help me Lord, to live my life, with purpose and with joy. (Two men in ‘perspex’ boxes on stage, only one shouting, “Free me, free me, free me.”) Now, the Lord is the Spirit and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty. ¹⁸⁻¹⁹**“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, and he has anointed me to be hope for the poor, (Two men in ‘perspex’ boxes on stage, only one shouting, “Free me, free me, free me.”), freedom for the brokenhearted, and new eyes for the blind, and to preach to prisoners, ‘You are set free!’ I have come to share the message of Jubilee, for the time of God’s great acceptance has begun.” (Luke 4:18-19 TPT).** (Two men in ‘perspex’ boxes on stage, only one shouting, “Free me, free me, free me.”).

I heard a call for freedom. There is this. (Pastor John hitting the box on all sides with a hammer). I see this man, he started calling for freedom but his voice, his voice has gone quiet, there seems to be no way in here. But I did hear his voice. He did say free me but he's gone quiet. And this one I've heard shouting. (Man in the box shouting, "Free me, free me, free me.") But there are also walls here. Where can I get in? (Pastor John hitting the box on all sides with a hammer). Oh, here is a back door, doesn't seem to be like there's anything here. (Pastor John helps the man to get out of the box.) You are free.

Look at this man. He has been set free. The Word of God that is like a hammer has broken down the resistance of the walls that consumed him and surrounded him. Won't you praise God with me that he is free. Praise Jesus he is free. He is free. He is free. Hallelujah. You may be seated and the rest of the work on the stage can get done. The gents that are going to come and move it come and help. Thank you.



The person standing on the left here started to cry, "Freedom," but something happened in the beginning of his crying. He began to focus on the self-oneness. So even as a Christian, born again person that has Jesus living in his heart, even though he started to cry, "Free me," the self-centered, self-oneness of his world began to consume and stifle his cries. The Bible refers to that as the deceitfulness of riches, the lust of the eyes, and the lust for other things, begin to creep in and they choke the word that is in your life. And so when you shout, "Free me," eventually if you give yourself over to the self-oneness, the oneness of yourself, that is desires, dreams, and your own goals that you wish to accomplish for yourself in your life. You are a Christian. You can see many things around you. You can even see the other Christians, you can actually hear the sounds that they make. You can see and you can observe and you can actually witness everything that's going on. But actually in your own life, and in your own Christian walk, you are in a captive cage of soul, of

dreams, of desires, of your own goals that you want to achieve for yourself in your life.

This other person that was crying, "Free me, free me," he began to recognise that actually, without God, he can do nothing. Not just the saving Jesus, but the personal, relational God, that has called him into a personal walk with Him. And as he began to respond to the call of God, the pull of God that was pulling in his spirit, and recognising that actually, his freedom doesn't lie in his self dreams, and the oneness of himself, and in his desires, and in all of the goals that he set for himself and those things that he wants to achieve in life, he realised that actually, his walk with God is actually in the Word of God. It's not just in the Word of God, it's also in the body of Christ that is the Ecclesia of God. And so, part of the demonstration I wanted to see to you today, is that if you're a Christian, that has put up walls around yourself, then when the Word of God's hammer - I'm going to read you this passage of Scripture very quickly. It's in Jeremiah, chapter 23, verse 29, it says ²⁹**"Is not My word like a fire?" says the LORD, "And like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces? (Jeremiah 23: 29 NKJV)** That is the Word of God that will come like fire, and it comes like a hammer, and it will break down resistance, if you let it. In the case of the first person, the cage, he started to cry, but then eventually he decided, "No, you know, I'm actually quite comfortable with my walk with God. I like to just see everything around me. But I want to live for my own self, I want to live with my own dreams, my own goals, my own achievements, my own things, and I want to be able to say I did it. I did it. I want to take credit for it. I want to live in myself, oneness, and everything that I relate to lives through the self-oneness of who I am. And so whatever relationships I have, it's because of how I did it. And whatever finances or achievements or careers or things, I did it." Until there is a dramatic, dramatic change that happens in your life. And then you turn to God. And then what happens is, "God, help me." And then He starts to hear the cry. But then pretty soon, you're still not ready to give up your goals and your dreams and your desires. And so you go quiet, and He still can't liberate you. Because you've realised, "Actually, I don't really want to be free. I just wanted help in the moment. So that actually I can keep living the way I wanted to. Help, just help me get through this moment so I can keep living the way I wanted to live." Praise the Lord.

I know that what I was revealing to you today was dramatic. It was designed to show you the dramatic because in real life this is how it works. "I will strengthen myself in my soul. I will strengthen myself in the ways that I want to go." You know how you can be sure that you're in a cage is that everybody else is to blame except for you? It's everybody else's fault except yours. In particular, the introspection that you do about yourself is actually just to improve yourself and to make yourself more acceptable for the stuff that you want. It's not about changing yourself to be what God wants. It's all about changing yourself by reading the Bible, and by spending time even praying, but for what you want, not what God wants. That is the difference between people who go to church, versus people that understand that God has not called us just to be congregation members that go to church on a Sunday. And in church, they praise God and they pray, and they have all kinds of things that they do that are ceremonial. Yes, even born again, spirit filled, charismatic Christians have ceremonies Sunday after Sunday. And if it becomes a ceremony to you, even your

prayer time, and even your reading the Bible, if it becomes a ceremony to you, it has no benefit or profit to your liberation. You need to understand the power of God's word, and that He works through people.

“Well, I’ll sort myself out with myself before God.” Good for you. But in the Ecclesia of God, the way that God designed us to be one body, you can't actually be free from yourself, unless somebody else in the church that is around you, frees you. And you might say, ‘Well, that doesn't go according to the Word of God,’ I'm going to show you that it does. Stick with me this morning. John, chapter 14, in The Passion Translation says, **¹Don't worry or surrender to your fear. For you've believed in God, now trust and believe in me also.** Verse six, **⁶Jesus explained, “I am the Way, I am the Truth, and I am the Life. No one comes next to the Father except through union with me.” (John 14:1,6 TPT)** So here is the key. No one can actually experience the life of the Father, except you're in union with Him. Union with Him, not knowing about Him, not knowing Him from a distance, union with Him. Having union with Him is a much more powerful, closer, life changing experience day by day than just knowing Him or knowing about Him. I read this scripture to you last week. Ephesians four, verse 17 to 24 says, **¹⁷This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk.** In other words, don't walk around as a Christian like every other person that you come into contact with, **in the futility of their mind.** Can I just pause here for a minute, and give you just something for your own thought process? How many people do you think out there in the world, in the billions of people on this planet, think that their mind is so well adapted to knowledge, information, culture, that actually they think their mind and their talent or their something different is the thing that makes the difference between them and ordinary people? What about ordinary people who just seem to survive? They live in the futility of your mind, there is nothing about your mind that can actually give you purpose. There is nothing in your mind that can give you peace. There is nothing in your mind that can actually give you salvation, your mind is going to work against that. The futility of your mind. **¹⁸Having their understanding darkened.** Why? because they are self-centered people. They are the people that are always about self oneness - “As long as I'm okay here by me.” ... **being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them.** Well, you know, if you had to go to a number of very high profile, even just let's take our country, South Africa, never mind the rest of the world, but certainly if you're going to Europe and where there is very little active Christian religion going on, if you went to anybody and say, “You are ignorant,” they would say, “On the contrary, sir, we wish to correct you. We think we are enlightened because we no longer need church, we no longer need God. We just need our minds and our self will, and our education, and the things that we're born with. We don't need God. We are a very self contained people that know how to live.” Yet, the Bible calls them ignorant. Well, if you don't know God, then you're ignorant. I don't care how educated you are, how smart you are, how wealthy you are, and how many connections you have in the right places. You're ignorant.

Pretty strong language from the pulpit this morning, Pastor John. Well, it's because I want to walk you out of your cubicle and I want you to be free. ... **because of the blindness of their heart.** Well, here's the thing about your heart, if you make

choices in your heart - because the Bible says out of your heart flows the issues of life. If you make choices in your heart, your mind sets about analysing all the activities, all the conversations, everything that's happening around your world, to justify what you have chosen in your heart. But this scripture says that not only are you ignorant, not only is your understanding darkened, not only do you have the futility of mind, but, you also have blindness of your heart.

These people, ¹⁹**who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to the joy of their flesh, lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness,** ²⁰**But you have not so learned Christ,** ²¹**if indeed you have heard him, and have been taught by Him.** If you have been taught by Him, not taught by the world system; if you've been taught by Him. **As the truth is in Jesus,** ²²**that you put off concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitfulness of lusts** ²³**and be renewed in the spirit of your mind and that you put on the new man.** You can put on the new man like a coat and you can walk around and say, "This coat belongs to my new man and I live touching the world with a new man." ... **which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness (Ephesians 4:17-23 NKJV).**

Now, behind me I have two screens. On the side I've got a diagram for you, which is, I'm going to call the *Self Oneness diagram* and on the side here, I've got the *Ecclesia Church Assignment diagram*. Here's what happens as Christians. If you are a Christian that has received Jesus into your heart, He is the Lord and Saviour of your life, that doesn't change anything about the way you live your life, it only changes the fact that Jesus is now living in your spirit and you are a new creature. But you have to live life through your old creature, this body that's going to get corrupted and die, this mind that is actually still touching everything, all information and knowledge and all things that come to your world, your senses and your mind - you have to live as a Christian through that.

If you are still focused on yourself, even though you may be born again, what happens is that your life is still full of your dreams, it's full of your desires, it's full of your goals. You will have a financial goal, you will have a career goal, you will have rest and recreation, perhaps health and fitness, you will have relationships and in one of the little blocks of your life, you'll have church. You'll come to church on Sundays and you might pray during the week and you might do a few other things that will say, "I am a Christian." But what you do is you delegate God to a portion of your life. I find this even in a lot of Christians who are quite committed Christians, they come to church quite regularly, they might even be Christians, that tithe when it suits them. But you find that church is just a part of your life, and it has a good part to play because it centres you; it makes you feel like anything I do for the rest of the week is okay because I went to church and everything else I do with my money is okay, because I've tithed.

A part of one of the things in your life is to go to church, but you are still consumed with your dreams, your desires, your goals, the things that you want to achieve in life. Whatever you touch in the world around you, you touch through the prism of; it's a financial goal this one, this is a career goal this one, this is a relationship goal this

one, and so as you live in the world around you, it is through the prism of what you want, even as a Christian. When people walk around your life, and they beat on the sides of your being, to find out if there's a place to get in, or a place for the Word of God to get entrance to break down the mould that you've created around you; there's no getting in.

The Bible says in the book of Mark, there are people that for a time they let their guard down and they let the Word in and the Bible says that the weeds grow up right next to them. Those weeds are the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the deceitfulness of riches; they creep into your life and they choke the Bible, the Word, the revelation. They choke it.

Well, how do you know? How do you know if the Word of God is being choked in your life? Do you want to hear it? Are you sure? You really do want to hear this? Well, the first thing is, you'll know that the Word of God is being choked in your life when all your prayers, all your confessions, all your declarations, and your church life is about you. Then already, the word of God, weeds are growing up right next to it. It's about me, I need to do, I need to get what I'm going to get. I'll tell you the second part is that when you look at the people in the church around you, you look at them as a resource to serve you. And of course, you know, that you can't just go about the facade of saying, "Serve me." So what you do is you serve them. And then you expect a serving in return. And so because you're not serving out of selflessness, you're serving for something in return. You can know that the weeds are growing up right next to the Word of God in your heart. I'll tell you how else you can know whether the weeds are growing next to the Word of God in your heart and choking it in your life, is that when you start to blame other people, for what's going wrong in your life, for the things you haven't yet been able to achieve. The first place you begin to blame is you begin to blame the church. More particularly you blame me, the pastor because of course it can't be you because you're serving and you're confessing and you're praying, and it's everything you're doing, you're doing it. So you can't blame me, the oneness being, it's got to be someone else that's at fault. Because to take personal responsibility means actually you've got to require a repentance, not an accusation. And God never, never, never blesses anything where there's accusation and judgement and condemnation. He's not there. His life is not there. His blessing and His favour and his truth is not there.

How do you know that the Word of God is growing up in your heart, where things are not being choked and you're not being deceived, and all of those lust of your eyes, lust of the flesh and the pride of life, and those things are not consuming you. How do you know? Well, you will know that actually, you can't wait to get to church on a Sunday. And when you do come to church on a Sunday, you come with an open heart of worship, you come with an open heart of praise and thanksgiving. You're not actually looking to serve someone so you can get something in return. You're looking to bring your gift and your service, because you actually really want to serve Him. And then you recognise that the messenger that God has sent into your life, the last thing you want to do is blame me, accuse me, condemn me. Because what am I? I'm just the messenger of God. So, if you accuse me, blame me and do that, you're blaming God for the problem that you have in your life. Do you see the difference in

attitude? Self-oneness person versus someone that is really wanting the will of God in their life and they're wanting to live in the authority and the blessing and the favour, and all of the abundance of the assignment that God gives you, but can only be achieved through the Ecclesia which means you understand that the collective governance, that is the church, is what brings you to the most powerful part of your life.

I can't go back today, if this is your first time in church, I can't go back and explain too much to you about the word Ecclesia, except that Jesus didn't talk about the church in the form of a congregation of people. He talked about the church in the form of and I use the Greek word, *Ecclesia*, which means to rule. Which is why the world is hungry to see the emergence of the church, because the church is not just a body here that will marry you, bury you, christen your children and occasionally you come to church, because it's fun. Because the pastor puts on a drama for you or because there's great music in the church. You understand that that happens in the church but rarely the Church that Jesus died for is a church that has influence in the world.

We have powerful prayers that change and can remove presidents and kings. We have prayers that can change governments. We have prayers that can change circumstances in people's lives. We have the love of God that reaches out and touches people and changes people. We have the glory of God that is shining through our every being, the relationships that we have reflect that we have rulership over ourselves and then over the circumstance. The first thing that happens in Ecclesia, is that you know how to govern and rule yourself. Which is why the oneness, self-being is such a challenge when it comes to, "I want to be a Christian that knows how to walk in abundance and power and freedom. But I want my oneness of my selfishness. But I want peace and abundance and I want contentment." But you got to understand that there's a journey you've got to walk with the church.

Now you know, if you've been around me long enough, you'll know that I do not consider this building to be the church. I do not consider any of these resources, TV's, or anything else that we have as the Church. You are the Church and it is our connectedness that makes the Church. If you remember last week, I said don't dislocate yourself. Don't dismember yourself. Well, Pastor John, you are the one that dismembered me. I doubt it. I doubt it. I'm not saying that I'm not one that can make mistakes. I certainly can. But I'll tell you that the love of God is always present with me in every person, every relationship, every group of people that God has placed in my care. He's placed and asked me to pray for you. He's asked me to carry you in my heart with the love of God, and to watch over your soul. But sometimes watching over your soul doesn't come with a pat on the back and say, "Well done."

Sometimes watching over your soul says, "You won't do this." "Why are you saying I can't do this?" "I heard it from God." "Well, I don't receive it from you, that's not the way I see it." Well, you've just said to the messenger of God, "I don't receive it from God. This is not God. And my judgement is what you've just done, Pastor, is not God." That is sure proof that you're living in the oneness of self. That it's about your

dreams, your goals, your stuff that you want. Because if it doesn't fit what you believe, then others are to blame.

So, Ephesians chapter four verse 15, says ¹⁵**but, speaking the truth in love...** So, sometimes when you speak the truth in love, people don't want to hear but you have to have the truth in love so that you **may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—** ¹⁶**from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love (Ephesians 4:15-16 NKJV).**

I've got news for you, I can't grow beyond a certain level if you don't grow with me. And if you don't allow the growth to happen in your heart, your whole growth is designed to challenge me. Come on now. Okay, so you know the story quite well because I'm talking about relationships and I'm talking about the resurrection power of Christ. Because there's things that the resurrection power of Christ that raised Jesus from the dead, that also raised you out of your darkness and out of your self life, and gave you new life that empowers you to live with the choices that you can make to be free. You don't have to be stuck in a cage of self-oneness. But you've got to let somebody help you out there because you can't let yourself out. Hallelujah. Just like I couldn't leave my arm at home today. I think I'll disconnect it and leave it there because I don't need it today. You can't do that. If my arm is hurting, and it's painful, and it's got gout in it, and it's inflamed, I still have to bring it with me. And so I'll wrap it up and put a bandage around it and I'll make it, I'll protect it but I can't go anywhere without this inflamed, hurt arm. So what does the rest of the body start to do? Come on now, this is basic biology. The rest of the body goes about putting a lot of focus and a lot of energy in trying to fix this inflamed joint. Right? And so actually, the rest of the whole of the rest of the body starts to be impacted because this joint is inflamed, because this joint something is rebelling against the rest of the body here. You may say this, "You're preaching well, Pastor John." You can say it again. [Congregation says, "You are preaching well, Pastor John."]

And so I tell you the timeless truth in John chapter 14 verse 12 in The Passion translation. ¹²**"I tell you this timeless truth: The person who follows me in faith, believing in me, will do the same mighty miracles that I do—even greater miracles than these because I go to be with my Father! (John 14:12 TPT).** In other words, we can do greater miracles because Jesus said we can because He goes to the Father, which means we all collectively can do miracles if we understand that we are in Christ. Come on, do you want some teaching to help you understand that scripture? So, is there any single one person, any single one person that's born again living on this earth, that is greater than Christ? So is there any single one person on the earth that can do greater miracles than Christ? So how is it that Jesus says to His disciples, ¹²**...the person who follows Me in faith, believing in me, will do the same mighty miracles that I do—even greater miracles than these because I go to be with my Father! (John 14:12 TPT).**

So that would immediately make you feel and refer to the fact that you can do greater miracles than Jesus because Jesus is sitting at the Father. But did Jesus not

say Him and the Father are one and that everything that He says and doesn't, is because the Father told Him to do? So how could He have done less miracles while He was on the earth, and we can do greater miracles as individuals? Number one, He considers all of us to be one body, in Him, and the Holy Spirit that is in us is the One who does the miracles and He lives in all of us. So where Jesus could only do miracles in one body at one time, all of us can do miracles simultaneously at the same time. Therefore, we can do even greater miracles not because they're greater in itself, but because they're greater because we can all do it. Hallelujah.

¹³For I will do whatever you ask me to do when you ask Me in My name. And that is how the Son will show what the Father is really like and bring glory to Him. ¹⁴Ask Me anything in My name, and I will do it for you!" ¹⁵"Loving Me empowers you to obey My commands. Remember, we're talking about relationships. **Loving Me empowers you to obey My commands (John 14:13-15 TPT).** "I'm sorry, I can't get rid of the fear that I have." "Loving Me empowers you to obey My commands. I have not given you a spirit of fear, but of love, and of power, and a sound mind." "But this fear keeps dominating me." "Loving Me empowers you to obey My commands. What's My command? You do not have to live in fear, because I didn't give it to you. You live in love and power and a sound mind." "But I can't seem to get to that." "Obey Me. Connect with Me, love Me." Hallelujah.

¹⁶⁻¹⁷And I will ask the Father and He will give you another Savior, the Holy Spirit of Truth, who will be to you a friend just like me and He will never leave you. The world won't receive Him because they can't see Him or know Him. But you will know Him intimately because He will make His home in you and will live inside you (John 14:12-17 TPT). That's why I'm confident that if the Holy Spirit of love is living inside of you, and He's the One that's actually driving you that you won't look at the brothers and sisters in the church and look at the Church and say, "Well, they don't quite fit my mould." What you'll do is you'll see the smallest, youngest Christian that is just full of God, can be seven years old, and you can see Christ in them and if you see the Christ in them, you could call a seven year old over because of the pure worship that they have with God and you can call that seven year old over and say, "Please, put your hand on my hurting knee and ask Jesus to heal it." And the Spirit that is in that child will release faith for healing to your body.

John chapter 15 verse 1, again in The Passion Translation. I'm going to need to read this because it's the best way that I can get it through to you, is the Bible itself. **¹I am a true sprouting vine, and the farmer who tends the vine is my Father. ²He cares for the branches connected to me by lifting and propping up the fruitless branches and pruning every fruitful branch to yield a greater harvest (John 15:1-2 TPT).** "But Pastor John, I don't like the pressure you're putting on me. I don't like the words that you're telling me. I don't like the stuff that this message is telling me today." Cut, cut, cut. Is it uncomfortable for you? Cut, cut, cut. What's He doing? Pruning you because actually when the season comes, He wants you to bear more fruit, to actually show Him off better. "Yeah, but sometimes the way you say it I do not like it." Sorry for that. I'm human. If there's anything about my humanity that you can say, "I see the humanity in there." It's here when I'm in the pulpit. If I'm in the pulpit, and you say, "I do not like what you're saying." Then you say, "He's just the

messenger, but I'll receive what God's saying." Hello. But when I'm standing in the pulpit here, it's not John Bendixen speaking. My own humanity might show forth because sometimes the way that I communicate might not be as much as what I see in my spirit but I trust that the Holy Spirit will reveal to you all that you need to know even though I'm inadequate in the way that I can share all that Christ is. This vessel can't hope to show you everything that Christ is, certainly not on a Sunday morning. But whatever you need, I have to trust the Holy Spirit that He brings the message to you and He works in you and ministers it to you in such a way that it deeply affects your heart and will change you.

He cares for the branches connected to me by lifting I've said about the pruning, to yield a greater harvest. ³The words I've spoken of you have already cleansed you. ⁴So you must remain in life-union with me, for I remain in life-union with you. That sounds like a God-centred lifestyle. Come on now. That sounds like a God-centred lifestyle. **For as a branch severed from the vine will not bear fruit, so your life will be fruitless unless you live your life intimately joined to mine.** Hallelujah. **⁵I am the sprouting vine and you're my branches. As you live in union with me as your source, fruitfulness will stream from within you—but when you live separated from me you are powerless. (John 15:2-5 TPT)**

Powerless. Come on. Everything that you have in God is full of power. The man standing in the cage here. He can see everything, he can see all the Christians behaving the way that they behave. He can see all the music that's going on. He can see all the world that's going by, but he's completely constrained by a self-made cage. And even though from time to time, the pastor comes with a message and he brings a hammer and he bangs on the side of the cage to see if maybe there's an opening, maybe there's some way that we can actually bring some deliverance. You hear the message, you see the message, you see what's going on around but don't touch this part of my life because everything else in my life that's just; church is just a part of my life, don't come and tell me that I must live my life in God. I just want church to be one part of my life. I want to have everything else the way I wanted to have it. Come on, just because I preach this to you doesn't mean to say that sometimes the enemy of God will come to me and want me to actually live in my own self-oneness. This applies to all of us all the time. You never get to a point in your life where the self-oneness, self-desire, self-goal, self-dreams doesn't come and rise up inside of you and say, "You should take charge of your life. The Church's got too much to say." Hey? Ja, even me, ja. Even every significant minister and preacher that has graced this earth has had to struggle with that until the day they die. If you say, "That's not me struggling with that," yes, it is. "Well, you don't know what it is." I don't know what particular area it is that you will struggle with, but you will. "Well, give me an example, Pastor John."

Well, I'll give you an example of a man that I regard as one of the most spiritual men that I have ever had the privilege of being in his company and being mentored through his messages and his ministry. His name was Kenneth Hagin. And when Kenneth Hagin was in his mid 70s, the Holy Spirit visited him and said to him, "You need to start having Holy Ghost meetings." And Kenneth Hagin's response to the

Lord Jesus was - silence. He did nothing. He never obeyed Him. He never spoke against Him, but he never obeyed Him. He just didn't do it. In his heart, he had a conversation with himself and he said, "There's so many flaky churches out there that have the move of God, where there's all kinds of weird things going on in church. And I have established my ministry as a credible ministry of reputation of the Spirit of God, of the fruit of the Spirit, of the gifts of the Spirit; and being in the ministry all these 60 odd years or 57 years at that time and so, I don't want to ruin what I've lived my whole life establishing, by having a few people label me with those weirdos."

What was happening to Kenneth Hagin at his mid 70s? It was the self-oneness of his own dreams and his own goals and his own desires that was affecting him. In that moment, he put Holy Ghost meetings as a separate category in his life and said, "I won't, I won't do that." Well, when you have that much responsibility before God, and you know God as well as he knew God, and had many, many visitations by Jesus actually coming into his room. He died three times when he was 17 or there about. He died three times and God raised Him from the dead, so that he could get saved. Because twice he went to hell. And the third time, he came back into his body, he realised, "I'm a Baptist, but I'm not born again. I've been in church all my life, but I've never made Jesus the Lord, the personal Lord and Savior of my life." And he prayed the prayer of salvation. And the third time he died, his spirit went to heaven. And then God sent him back to the earth and said, "You have an assignment for the rest of your life that I want you to take to my people." That was just the first encounter that he had with a supernatural God, a divine God. And he had many such things.

And when you've been preaching the gospel and bringing faith and bringing the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit to the church for over 55 years, 60 years, and then you disobey God something tells you to do, the consequences are severe. In short time like that, he found himself in hospital. His heart was failing. You know, the thing that nearly killed him, or did kill him when he was 15, was a weak heart. From the time that he started to give his life to Jesus till the time that he was in his mid 70s, never had a heart problem again, never had any sickness and disease on his body again. But suddenly, he's in the hospital and his heart is failing. He's dying, literally, he's dying. He's in the hospital and he's saying, "God, how come I can't use my healing, the healing Scriptures, the faith that I have for healing, how come I can't use that healing strength right now for my own body?" The Holy Spirit spoke to him and said to him, "You disobeyed Me by not having Holy Ghost meetings. And so, you left the door open for the enemy to come and attack your life and bring sickness and disease into your body." In that moment he said, "Forgive me, Lord, I repent. If I am healed, I will immediately begin Holy Ghost meetings." In an instant, God healed his heart. That demonic force that was trying to kill his life left him. What happened? For a moment he switched into self-oneness on that one issue. Instead of understanding that what God's doing is He's calling him in his assignment and his place in Ecclesia - is designed to touch all these areas so that we can impact the world system wherever we touch it.

⁷But if you live in life-union with me and if my words live powerfully within you—then you can ask whatever you desire and it will be done. ⁸When your

lives bear abundant fruit, you demonstrate that you are my mature disciples who glorify my Father! (John 15:7,8 TPT) Sometimes, you have to bear fruit. You have to bear fruit by just not saying anything, you know. Sometimes you have to be strong and you have to stand up and say strong things. Like today, but you love it. Because you want to be the ones that bear abundant fruit, don't you? You want to be those people.

We are busy building outside at the moment, in a couple of weeks it will be finished. We're building a decking outside so that all of the MiXchangers that are joining us for this year, so that we've got some space to go and sit outside when we need to as a decking, but we'll be able to open the decking and have a baptismal font in the decking so that we can all stand around and do baptisms anytime of the year you like. If it's winter, we'll ask LeRoux who comes from Bethlehem, and he knows what cold is all about. He can get in and he can baptise the people you know, because he grew up with shorts and didn't have any shoes on his feet so he can get into cold water and baptise people. Praise the Lord.

⁹I love each of you with the same love that the Father loves me. You must continually let my love nourish your hearts. ¹⁰ If you keep my commands, you will live in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands, for I continually live nourished and empowered by his love. ¹¹My purpose for telling you these things is so that the joy that I experience will fill your hearts with overflowing gladness! ¹²So this is my command: Love each other deeply, as much as I have loved you. ¹³For the greatest love of all is a love that sacrifices all. Sacrificing all? That means I sacrifice my dreams, my desires, my goals, so that I can switch - not from a self-oneness position but I can switch into a God-orientated lifestyle where it's not, "Church is just a part of my life." But, "God is everything in my life. And everything that's in my life is by God." ¹³For the greatest love of all is a love that sacrifices all. And this great love is demonstrated when a person sacrifices his life for his friends. ¹⁴You show that you are my intimate friends when you obey all that I command you (John 15:9-14 TPT). Hallelujah.

I'm going to just talk for just a few moments about inter-God relationship and interpersonal relationship. Give me five more minutes. Are you enjoying this? Are you getting something out of this today? Okay, here's the thing. If I want interpersonal relationships to be really fruitful, significant, bearing fruit in my life, can I make that happen? I can't make that happen. What I can do is I can go to God and I can say, "God, I ask You and I'm connecting with You. I'm letting Your life and Your love impact me." When His love is fully in my heart, then I bring that love, the fullness of love that I bring, I bring to every relationship. The minute I do that with every relationship, I bring humility, I bring dignity, I put you above me. I bring no accusation. I bring no judgement, I bring no criticism. I bring no philosophy of my own that I must tell you about so that you can understand me. I come with an open heart, I come with a clear heart.

Every relationship, whether it be a relationship that is between a young man and a young woman who are unmarried, who think that maybe this relationship could go somewhere, if it's not God-centred first, then whatever happens after that, it will just

bring trouble. But you might say, "But we both are Christians, and we both love God." It's still not equal. I have observed many relationships, where one person in the relationship is totally wanting to sacrifice everything for God, and the other person in the relationship doesn't want to, and there's tension. And very often there is a restraint that is on the person that wants to have a full life of assignment with God.

If you're in oneness with God, and not oneness with yourself, you look at everybody in a completely different light because why would you want to criticise someone in your life? Would you not want to give them the benefit of the doubt? Because the minute you have criticism and self-opinion judgement about a person, are not making yourself more important and knowing more than the person you've just judged, or criticised? I know more than you. How about that? Surely, if the love of God is in you, and you want fruit inside the church environment, you have to be on your guard and you've got to be constantly aware that every relationship that you're touching, that your words are and your behaviour is one that wants them to grow to the fullness of what God's called them to. So, but what if it's at my cost? So what if it's at your cost? If you are in a place where you say, "Prune me because my behaviour is not good here." Then what you can do then, is bear more fruit. So actually, while it may be at your cost, in the short term, in the medium to long term, you're the one that bears fruit. And what if, when you elevate that person and you do everything for that person's interest, they are actually able to achieve a greater height in God? Do you not share in that person's harvest? So as a body of Christ that is connected together, our whole, the whole shebang, the whole deal is that Jesus would be so strong amongst us that we take no glory for anything that happens to ourselves, neither do we criticise or judge anybody for what they are doing. We walk in love and we walk in the love of truth. That doesn't mean to say that if somebody is doing something wrong, you don't tell them in truth, "This is out of order."

My son Brynn here will tell you that for the most for a large portion of his life, his relationship with me was relationship between son and father. There came a time in his life, where the person that happened to deliver the message to him was his mother. And his mother said to him, "Your father is not just your father, he is your spiritual authority. And if you cannot submit to what the spiritual authority in your life says, then you cannot receive anything from God." That was a big moment in Brian's life because he broke down in tears. And actually, he repented for days with tears and weeping and crying. Because he realised all of his life he had seen me as his dad. He had the familiarity of me as dad. He'd seen me in my humanity, even though he knew I was a spiritual man. He wasn't yet ready to submit his oneness of self to the spiritual authority that was me. It's not only happened with Bryn in my family. I've had it happen with other members of my family where they see in me and in Pastor Sharon the humanity of who we are. And in our humanity, I promise you, you can say lots of stuff about us. But the minute you now come and talk to me about my humanity. I had a family member actually say one day that they believe that their calling is equal to my calling and wanted to actually walk alongside me in the church as an equally called person, a family member. Well, you know, I can't help that they feel that way. And so of course, I've paid a price all my life to walk in this office. In my whole life, everything I've done in my whole life, is to serve Jesus, to love Jesus, and to walk with Jesus and give my life to Jesus and serve the Church of Jesus. Even

when I was in the corporate workspace, I was serving Jesus more than I was actually serving my own self. So I paid a price to walk in this office. And in a very short space of time, a family member came and said, "I'm equal to you. So I want to share the same space as you." Sorry, you can't do that God hasn't told me that you're equal to me in this church. So if you feel that way, go and start your own church, and walk in your own authority, your own calling, your own anointing, go do it. Don't come here and try and take my stuff. So what happened to my family member? They were living in the oneness of themselves. And church was a part of their life that they wanted more prominence in, but actually, they lived for the rest of their life by themselves. So I had to speak the truth in love. Didn't like it. No longer part of my life for any meaningful anything, because it wasn't what they wanted to hear. You're talking some personal stuff here today. Well, here's the thing about it, if you think that where we stand in life, the enemy doesn't come and try and drag everything that we are, our ministry, all our life into that self-oneness where we pursue our own dreams, goals and our own desires and the things that we want. If you think the enemy doesn't want Sharon and I to do that, you're mistaken. On the contrary, the very people he wants to do that to are me and her. Because if we live in that space, guess what's going to happen to you? You got nowhere to go. You either got to leave the church or you got to follow me. And so where am I going to take you? Help you make your dreams come true. Let's achieve goals together. Let's follow.. What plan are you making? Let me help you to get your plan. And God stands on the sidelines and He says, "What can I do for you?" "But Lord, You said I can ask anything in Your Name and you'll do it for me." "But you're not doing it in My Name. You're doing it in your name."

And so of course, people in my family, they blame me, blame me. I'm the person that's wrong because they can't be. Because what happens if they take responsibility for themselves? Come on work with me now. Then they've got to stand before God and say, "Maybe I'm wrong. Now I must repent. And if I've got to repent, then all of the stuff that I really want for myself, I've got to let it burn on the altar. Got to let it burn on the altar. God's got to burn it with fire. He's got to let His hammer break down the most stubborn resistance that's in my heart. I've got to let it burn. But I don't like that. I don't want it to burn. I don't want it to be broken... I want what I want." Don't shout me down. You know, you can shout me down, come on. Hallelujah.

Well, how am I ever going to get to this point, Pastor John? Where I have the relationship with God that actually will lead me to have relationships the way that you've described - full of fruit, full of joy, full of peace, full of wholesomeness, goodness? Well, I'll tell you, His power is already in you. You just got to let the body of Christ minister to you. A sure sign actually, that you're actually not letting this happen and you're in your cage is isolation.

This is why the Lord has me speaking about relationships now, because for two years the devil has tried his best to isolate you, the Church, from each other. Isolate you from me, and me from you. So guess what? God had me focused on anything and everything that I could do to bring messages to you, love to you. Everything from a digital platform, to doing whatever we could to bring love to you. To help you

through the time where the devil was breaking relationships, isolating people, going against their minds, causing futility in their minds, causing all kinds of death and destruction in people's lives, and all manner of things. People begin to question God, "Where is God now with this economy? Where is God with all the sickness and disease? He's supposed to be in control of everything." And so the enemy has come with a big lie because of a virus. Tried to separate the Church. Try to make us live on our own in our own little bubble. I've got good news for you; God already knew that a long time ago. And when He said, "I'm going to take the children." He said, "I'm breaking the hold that the world system, that Babylon has had over young adults and young children, I'm breaking the mould. They are no longer going to serve the world. They're going to serve Me. And what the devil has meant for their harm, I'm going to turn it around, and I'm going to take them for Myself. And I'm going to make them a powerful force in My hands and they are going to do great and mighty works in the Name of Jesus. They're going to cast out devils, they're going to heal the sick, they're going to do great and mighty things in the Name of Jesus. They're going to be full of the Holy Ghost, they're going to be full of wisdom and full of power. They're going to be doing great and mighty things because it's not about themselves. It's about the oneness they have with God. And they chose to give up their future to follow a future with God. Hallelujah.

I'm getting ready to see these first ones that were first fruit ones. And this next year that's coming for, not one of them decided to go back into the world system this year, they all came back. And now we've got a whole bunch more coming this year. And we're just going to get bigger and bigger, and I'm telling you, it's going to be mighty works that are going to be done in the Name of Jesus. There's going to be a great centering of God in their lives and they are just going to go and do some things that are going to just... People are going to say, "Where'd you come from? You're only 19 or 20 but you've got an authority, like somebody that walks around that's got a theological degree, that's got an authority of 30 years." You're going to say, "Yes, that's Jesus in me. That's my *boetie* and *sussie* next to me. We got it together. We love each other. We don't fight each other. We don't compete with each other. We're not trying to politic each other or criticise each other or judge each other. We love each other. And we are here to love the world through the same love."

God is redeeming relationships. And he's using the first fruits of last year's MiXchanges. He's using the first fruits to redeem your relationships. And the next ones that are coming this year, He is going to use you too. He's going to redeem relationships in the church. He's going to redeem relationships in marriages, redeem relationships between friends, between brother and sister and sister and brother, between cousins and nephews and uncles and aunts. God's going to start doing something and you're going to see families are going to come before God and they're going to bow the knee to the Lord Jesus Christ. And they're going to say my life is not worth anything unless I'm worshipping Jesus. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Glory to Jesus.

God is raising up for Himself a people where COVID was going to come and destroy the church. He's rising up a church that is going to be strong. Hallelujah. So be

strong and stand with me right now, before I preach the whole afternoon Hallelujah. Glory to Jesus.

Put your hand, please, if you don't mind on your chest here and pray this prayer with me and declare it with me and say, "I am a son of God. Jesus lives in my heart. He is my Saviour. I give my life to Him and I ask You Holy Spirit, to empower me to live for you with everything I've got. In Jesus' name. Amen."

You know, if you pray that prayer right now, you watch this, because we don't make this live until tomorrow afternoon, for various reasons. But when this goes,] live tomorrow afternoon, go back and watch and pray this prayer again, and pray this prayer every day, so that the power of the Holy Spirit just gets in you and lifts you up and strengthens you, and causes life to be abundant inside of you. Hallelujah.

Hey, if you think I'm a radical preacher, you should have heard Jesus when He was on the earth. At least I haven't brought a whip with me. Not yet. I had a hammer this morning. But not yet a whip. Hallelujah. Can we just pray together as we close the service.

Father, I thank you that the words that are spoken, that have been spoken today will enter into the hearts of the people that are hearing. I pray Father, that it will stay there, it will grow there. It won't even grow up with weeds, it will grow up pure, and there will be a great harvest of fruit in their lives. I thank You that Your peace is upon them. No weapon formed against them prospers. You bless their going out and their coming in. And thank You, Lord, that You protect them and no weapon formed against them or prosper. You give your angels charge over them and ask You, Father, that they are blessed and favoured, and they just have a week where they know You are right there with them and they can touch Your presence this week, in Jesus' Name. And everybody in agreement said; Amen.

Thank you for coming to church. God bless you. The Joburg people that are going to stay behind and have a meeting with me, I ask you to please come over to this side - over here when everybody's left and everything's going, please come over to the side so we can have a chat. Thank you.