

Message Transcript

YOU WILL RECEIVE POWER | NOW IS THE TIME

AARON BROCKETT | NOVEMBER 1, 2025

Video of Elana:

I grew up in New York City. So, art, culture everywhere, everything food, smells, hustle bustle, driving on the Meadowbrook in Long Island with an excitement for life. Right? That is New York City. And it just always inspired me.

I grew up in a Christian household but I think I relied on their faith rather than having my own. When it came down to the next part of my life, figuring out where I wanted to go to school, I applied to SUNY. I applied to Potsdam. I applied to Eugene Lang which is an art school. And I got in.

Both of my best friends at the time they got full ride scholarships to NYU and the other one was going to Yale. Then I realized that the tuition was way too high. And this plan that I was anchored in, I'm going to be with my best friends shattered.

I was like, I'm not going to be with my friends. I'm not going to be in New York City. I'm going to lose all of these things that I found comfort in. And I don't know what to do. I felt lost and broken. It broke me in a place that I'd never been broken before.

I'm just like, "I'm not getting what I deserve, what think I want. And nobody's going to help." So I wanted out. I wanted out of life. I decided I was going to take my life. And that was the only thing that I could control.

When I had my attempt I lost my friends I lost confidence in everyone and everything. But then there was this space where I was forced to say and to confront, "God, You are my last hope. I've heard about You and I want to know You and I need You. So if You're real, You need to do something." It was the darkest, the darkest moment of my life.

Elana spent the next two months of her life recovering at her dad's house in the Bronx

I don't know if you've seen a plant in a nursery but that's kind of what it was, a little seedling in this greenhouse. And I was hungry. I felt like I just came out of the desert and I got my first sip of water. And I'm like about to swallow a bucket whole. I'm like, "Okay, God. I'm alive." I felt like I was walking for the first time.



Elana attended community college for the next year. In 2014 she moved to Indy and started attending Indiana Wesleyan University. She graduated in 2017 and started her career in education.

I started attending Traders at the time it opened back up after COVID. I was going along with money and schooling, education, and all of that stuff. And I realized that those things were not fulfilling me. I was like, "Okay, we're going to surrender everything. How scary is that? God, I'm going to trust You with my future. And I'm really going to trust you with my future. I don't know what that means but I know You do. And that's going to have to be enough for me."

In 2024 Elana started serving and joined a group.

Taking little itty bitty steps at a time, giving my time, and I knew I also needed to change financially too. And I didn't know what that meant. So, I actually took the Financial Foundations course and man it was a game changer. I was like, "Wait, this is possible. I can contribute. Like, me? I can do stuff. So I started tithing more specifically for Awaken.

And realized this is what God was telling me to do. So, all of my resources not just like some, but everything I have. Denying myself was a big portion of it. When you are used to getting things for yourself like, you know, the latest video game or, "I just want to get this." Or, "I'm just going to go here, wherever," and you're like, "Pause, let's put that into Awaken."

And you are like, "Oh, but I really want to do this thing." Or, "Oh my." It's a torn thing because eternally I could be using this for something else. When you are back on the perspective of what God wants you to do it makes it a little bit easier, probably a little bit lighter. And over time you see how God rewards you for that.

I feel like I'm a part of something bigger. It's liberating knowing that the control aspect of me making my purpose doesn't have to exist. My purpose is in what God defines and calls for my life. And that is so freeing because it takes the weight off of me.

And that changed my perspective on the day to day. It was no longer just la-de-da. It was moving with intensity, intentionality, mindfulness, and overall battleship mentality. Like we are doing this together. And that's been my prerogative ever since. What a way to live. What a way to feel alive.



Once I stopped worrying about my worth, that's the word, my worth, my legacy is not going to be in what I do, it was in following Jesus and letting Him take it. That's when everything changed. And I became awake for the first time ever. Really. I'm alive. I feel alive. It's crazy. But I just wish more people felt that too.

Aaron Brockett:

Hey, come on man. Give it up for Elana. I just appreciate her willingness to be that vulnerable and transparent and the courage to share her story. Elana, thank you so much. We just love and appreciate you for doing that.

Man, so good to be back with you guys. Did you enjoy and appreciate all of the guest preachers over the course of this last month? Weren't they great? I tuned in every single service, every single weekend and was just blessed by it. It's just an honor to bring in some of the best of the best.

In fact, a day or two ago somebody came up to me and said, "Hey, Aaron do you get a little bit worried or nervous when people come who are that good?" I was like, "Not until you said that."

Actually, I have zero problem bringing in preachers and communicators who I feel are better than me because I take so seriously this stewardship and the teaching of God's Word. I just want to expose you to some of the best of the best and for you to just get a sampling of what God is doing in other parts of the vineyard, in His Kingdom.

And I just want to say this. Thank you so much for just welcoming them so warmly. Every single one of them texted me and they were like, "Man, your people are so great." And I just want to thank you guys. Give yourselves a hand for that. It's amazing.

But, really good to be back with you as we kick off a new series of messages for the next four weekends called Now Is The Time. And for those of you who have maybe just started coming to our church inside the last two years, in the fall of 2023 we started off on a journey together that we call Awaken.

Now, if you are unfamiliar with what Awaken is or maybe you've heard the word but you're not quite sure exactly what all of that entails, it's a resource initiative to be sure because it does take financial resources to accomplish the mission and the vision that God has before us, but that has never been the primary goal.



The primary goal is that it would be an individual discipleship journey. In fact, the way that we said it two years ago—we've been saying this for the past 24 months. We first of all, "Want to become awakened to the work that God wants to do in me." Hard stop. And then, "Once I begin discern what that work is that You want to do in me," then we proceed to say, "what is the work that You want to do through me?"

And I love Awaken not because of the financial resources that have come in but because of the stories that have come in about how God has been at work in your lives. I've heard from single people, couples, families—DMs, text messages, emails saying, "You know, we started off on this journey like we kind of entered into it a little bit reluctantly and we made the decision to give God the first and the best of our resources and our stuff, quite honestly because if God isn't first there then He isn't first."

Regardless of what we say or even believe... We can say and believe, "God is first in my life," but until He's first when it comes to our things, then He isn't really first. Now, that's not Second Opinions 4:17, those are the words of Jesus in Matthew 6:21. Jesus would say it this way:

"For where your treasure is," now treasure is the word for the things that you treasure as well as your financial resources. He goes wherever that is, "there your heart will be also." Matthew 6:19 (NIV)

Now, that has proven to be true in my life over and over and over again. I've been following after Jesus 30 plus years and God continues to take me on that journey where I feel like there have been moments where I'm surrendering that area of my life to Him and the He opens up a brand-new door and shows me a brand-new room I haven't gone into yet. And he says, "Aaron, there is still more to do. There is still more to mine out here," because it's a discipleship journey.

And I don't fully know how this works, but for those of you who have been following after Jesus for a while, you could probably attest to this, when Jesus says, "For where your treasure is, your heart will be also," I want you to imagine, it's like this thin fishing line wire where from a distance it would almost be invisible, you can't see the wire.

And one end of the wire is attached to your heart. And when I say heart, I'm not talking about that physical muscle pumping in your chest, I'm talking about the seat of your emotions. The things that you worry about, you are anxious about. The things that you delight in and bring you joy. Your heart—the essence of who you are.



On the other end of that invisible fishing line wire is my Apple Pay, my Venmo, my investment portfolio, or my checking account. And here's what Jesus is saying. He says, "Wherever your resources go, your heart is attached to it through that wire and it will just follow after it."

Therefore, whenever you want to invest in the things that are eternal, which is the Kingdom of God, invest your stuff there first (which by the way is not an emotional thing, it's a decision you make) and then your heart will follow after it.

I don't know about you, that just seems counterintuitive. I would think it would be the other way around. I would think that I would say, "You know what? I'm going to determine what is really important and I'm going to send my heart there and then my resources will follow." Jesus says the exact opposite.

And just when I think that I have learned that lesson, God leads me through it again, which is why I've loved Awaken because it has deepened the discipleship journey of our church like nothing else. And honestly, that is my primary goal. The secondary or the third goal on down the line would maybe be the financial resources.

Lindsay and I committed, by faith, the largest number, financially, that we've ever committed two years ago to Awaken and, by the way, if you're waiting for the right time to jump in and trust God with your first and best, there is never a right time. There is always stuff that is going to come up.

So, we made the largest commitment we've ever made. Right after that we had two kids in college, one in private school, a minor surgery, a wedding now to pay for—please pray, just pray—and shortly after that we had this massive water leak, the sinister kind, the one that is behind the wall that you don't know about until everything comes crashing through the drywall. Yeah, that. And we had this large home insurance claim that we had to file. All of that happened right after Awaken.

Listen, guys. Two years into this I can't fully explain it but God has come through for us time and time again in unexpected ways that are nothing short of miraculous.

Now, listen. I know that this is like many of your stories. And the reason why I know that is your story is because you've told me. You DM'd me. You texted me. You emailed me, "Hey, we haven't shared with you our Awaken story." Remarkable stuff, man, has happened in our church.



Two years ago, some of you were unemployed. You made a commitment by faith and then next week you got a job. Like just crazy stuff and you weren't expecting that God would come through for.

And I also know, by the way, people have made a commitment and then you didn't get the job. Or you made a commitment and actually half-way through you had to pull back on it because of some unexpected bills. And it's been really challenging. Quite honestly, really frustrating, especially when you hear how God has come through in other people's lives.

Can I just say this? Once again, it is a discipleship journey, not an investment strategy. And if you treat it like an investment strategy, then that's a heart thing and God will actually lead you through that.

It is not a negotiation with God. You don't go, "God, I'll trust You with this, but You've got to come through for me in this." It is a discipleship journey and discipleship, by the way, is you being formed more and more into the image and likeness of Jesus.

And that is tailor made. God knows what you need and it is different than the person sitting next to you. Stop comparing your discipleship journey with the people you know in your small group. They are different. God knows your heart. He knows what you need.

For some of you, you needed a breakthrough that came right away because He was just waiting for you to move by faith. Others of us, it is a long, gritty, slog a long obedience in the same direction. And you are still waiting for God to come through and you know what He's doing? He's at work behind the scenes shaping your heart.

And I'm so grateful for this Awaken journey that we've been on over the last two years. It's very, very personal to me. This is not just like a campaign. This is something that God started to do in my life about five years ago and it culminated in this passage that I want to read. This is where we got the theme for Awaken. It's Paul's words to the Ephesian church in chapter 5, verses 8 through 17. Let me read it to you. Follow along with me. Paul writes:

"For you were once darkness," or you could even say in darkness, "but now you are light" or in light "in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord.



"Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness," things don't grow in the dark, mold grows in the dark, gardens don't grow in the dark, "but rather expose them." Expose them how? With the light. "It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret.

"But everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated," by the light, that would be you and me, "becomes a light. This is why it is said:" here's where we got the theme, "'Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.'

"Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise," you want to know what you should be praying every day? Pray for wisdom. Pray for discernment. Pray for a sober mind. "...making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is." (NIV)

I remember reading those verses three years ago as the world was emerging from the COVID crisis and it was like they smacked me in my face because, quite honestly, I had fallen asleep in my spirit due to the crisis and all of the pressure of 2020, not only just trying to lead myself and my family but trying to lead our church through all of that. The pressure just got to me. And I was sort of numbing out as a defense mechanism from everything that we were navigating.

And I can even see the results here in our church. About 30 percent of our church bailed and left and we didn't know where they went. We were online but we didn't really know if you were tuning in online. And as we started to physically regather and many of you stayed online. And we were just trying to fight to regather.

But what we really needed was a fresh word from the Lord and a fresh vision for where He was leading us as a church. Greg Anderson, our Executive Pastor, I remember sitting down with him and he and I were using the analogy (this was before we started using battleship language) we said, "You know if the church is like a ship, we had the sails up. And then we got into the storm of COVID, we brought the sails down, brought it into the harbor, battened down the hatches to try to keep it from sinking.

"And now as we are emerging through this, we are still sitting in the bay sails down. We need to get it out of the bay, put the sails up. We've got to ask God to bring the wind of the Holy Spirit to blow us into a new day." But we didn't know where to go. We were just sort of stuck trying to figure out how to even untie this thing.



So, in the second half of 2020 and 2021, honestly, I was like sort of on auto pilot. And I think, even as a church, there was really no sense of urgency. We didn't know what to believe. And we were operating, I was operating, more out of fear and confusion rather than confidence in our God and clarity for what He was saying for us in the midst of the chaos.

In 2 Timothy, chapter 1, verse 7 Paul writes these words to a young, fearful leader by the name of Timothy. He says, "God has not given us the spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline." You could even say a sound mind.

Would you not agree that there is a lot to be fearful and timid about in our culture right now? So, God says, "Hey, I've not put that spirit in you. I've actually put the Spirit of power."

You might say, "Well, power can lead us to some really dark places." It can if it is not bridled up to the next two words: love and self-discipline. So he says, "God is going to give you that Spirit."

Now, every five years we have this policy where the pastors on our staff get a sabbatical. A sabbatical is different from what I do every summer, like a study break thing. A sabbatical is a complete disconnection from the job for anywhere from like six to 10 weeks where you just kind of get out of here and you don't have any responsibilities upon you.

And I know what you are thinking. Many of you are thinking, "Well, I wish I had a sabbatical in my job." And honestly, I wish you had one too.

Let me point this out. I will say this. And this is not to be like, "Whoa is us," for those of us who are in ministry because there are lots and lots of blessing, pros and cons.

I will say this. I just want to point this out. One of the reasons why we believe that a sabbatical every five years is really important is because oftentimes many of us don't understand the way that our spiritual health is connected to our job performance, it's a dangerous combination.

So, we say every five years you need to get out of here and you need to stop doing things for God because it's tied to your livelihood. You need to be reminded that you have value as a child of God so you can go the distance and don't blow things up and cause more church hurt.



So, every five years... Thank you that four of you agree with that. So, every five years a sabbatical. I do a study break every summer, which is just me getting away to study for the upcoming year. I'm still working. I'm just studying for the upcoming year.

A sabbatical, I'll take one next summer, is a complete distancing away from what I do to be reminded of the value that I have as a child of God. I was due for one in 2022. The elders said, "Eh, why don't you take it a year early. You need it." My son graduated from high school in 2021. It was a good time in our family rhythm to do so.

What many of you may not know is in May of 2021, when I was leaving here for my sabbatical I was burnt to a crisp. I was tinkered. I was like, "I am either going on sabbatical, or I've got to honestly decide if I want to keep doing this. I might resign."

Typically when I go on sabbatical I have a stack of books, a stack of things I want to get through. I want to read as much content as I can. I didn't want to read a thing. I didn't want to think, "I just need to get out of here."

So, our family went to someplace warm and tropical because that's where God lives. And we were there and I got up really early one morning, went to do a workout, stopped at a coffee shop, got some coffee and some pastries for my family.

I was taking it back to the house we were renting. And I was listening to this podcast by a guy who was a Navy Seal talking about the high percentage of those who go through BUD/S in San Diego, at Coronado Island and how they don't make it through hell week, they don't make it through BUD/S. They ring the bell and the tap out.

And he said you could always tell who was getting ready to ring the bell because their mind began to give out before their body. And when their mind would give out before their body, they would start to coast and you could see it in their workouts.

So, they would say on the swim if they thought nobody was watching, they would be coasting. On the sand run they would be coasting. On the log carry they would be the ones not really fully carrying their weight. You always knew that those guys were the ones who were susceptible to tapping the bell because they were beginning to coast.



And I remember the Spirit of God said, "Brockett, you are coasting." Here was my rebuttal, "But, God. It's been so hard. And the church is big enough now. And I've been doing this long enough now, I think I could probably coast for a while and the rest of the staff would be there and nobody will know."

And God said, "But I know." And I pulled that rental car to the side of the road and wept and repented and said, "I'm so sorry. Never again."

Now, doesn't that mean that I'm going to sprint, because that is foolish too. It doesn't mean that I'm never wrong. It doesn't mean that I won't make any mistakes. It means that I'm not going to phone it in. For the rest of my days, as long as God gives me breath, I'm giving the best of my efforts to advance the Kingdom of God within our church.

Guys, can I just say this? That was my awaken moment there on the side of the road. That was the origin of this initiative that we jumped into.

And when I came back after lots of prayer and conversation with all of the necessary leaders, we decided to call this two-year resource, discipleship initiative Awaken with the subtitle Now Is The Time.

Why? Because we've got to go now. Eternity is long. The Kingdom is imminent. People are dying facing a Christless eternity every day. This is urgent stuff that we are doing and we take it very, very seriously.

And we have not been given this one precious life to just sort of squander it away or to live for the next vacation or to even live for retirement. I'm not against retirement. I just don't want you to retire from the Kingdom of God. We haven't been given this one precious life to squander it.

God, I think, in His sovereignty ordained your days for this day. So, if you are like, "Man, the world just seems so chaotic and crazy." You know what? That's a compliment, that God would choose to have your life lived during these moments with His Spirit living in you because He says you're the answer to the darkness and the chaos and the confusion.

You do not have a spirit of fear. You do not have a spirit of timidity, but of power of love and self-control. And we are not trying to make converts. We're trying to make disciples.

So, right now I believe that we are watching God do things that I just never thought I would see Him do in my lifetime. It is wild to think that He would lead us to the theme of Awaken two-and-a-half, three years ago long before we would ever begin to see what is happening right now in culture. Whatever you want to call it: resurgence, revival.



We've talked a lot about awakenings. If I've been your pastor for any length of time you've heard me talk about maybe we could be in a fifth Great Awakening. We've been talking a lot about that. Long before we started talking about any of that, God led us to the theme of Awaken for this initiative. I don't think that is any mistake.

I see a couple of things happening right now at the same time. I see lots of anger, lots of division, lots of confusion, lots of evil, lots of darkness. And I see lots of clarity, lots of courage, lots of boldness, lots of the Spirit of God stirring things up and stirring people up that I never ever, ever, ever would have thought that I would see in my lifetime.

More professional athletes talking legitimately about God, not like, "God caused me to score that touchdown," kind of a thing. But like, "God is moving in my life," legitimate gospel stuff. People in every industry. Guys, there is something happening when Joe Rogan and Connor McGregor start talking about God. Go ahead. What in the world is going on? Connor McGregor?

Now, listen. Some of you are like, "Eh, how do you know if that is legitimate?" And I'm like, "Good question. They probably said the same thing about Saul." How do we know if it is legitimate? Well we don't know. But do you think that God is big enough to get ahold of their lives? And if you don't think He is big enough to get ahold of their lives, He's not big enough to get ahold of anybody's life.

And some of you are like, "I don't know, Pastor Aaron. Things seem to be getting really darker and scarier right now." That depends upon your perspective. Do you have a spirit of fear and timidity? Or, do you have a Spirit of power, love, and a sober mind?

Jesus told us this would happen. Jesus didn't say it was going to get darker and darker and darker and then, "I'm going to swoop in at the last moment and save everything." And He also didn't say it was going to get lighter, lighter, lighter, and more of a utopia and, "Then I'll come and it will just be great." Jesus said both will happen at the exact same time. Both will get ramped up at the same time.

There is a parable in Matthew 17 where Jesus illustrates this. It's called the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares. Tare is just another word for weeds. Weed doesn't really, fully capture it because when we think about weeds we think about weeds in our landscaping, not a tare. Tare is a different thing. I'll get to that in a minute.



So, Jesus said, "A farmer sows good seeds of wheat in a field," and the seed represents the gospel the field represents the true Kingdom of God. And then He said, "While everyone was," here's the word, "asleep," which is the opposite of awake, "the enemy comes and he sows the tares, sows the weeds, bad seed among the wheat in the field and they both grow together." And the servants come along and they ask if they should pull the weeds.

Now, honestly, I just had a farmer come up to me in between the last two services—one of the great things about pastoring in central Indiana. And he came up to me and he said, "Hey, I don't know if you know the difference between a tare and a weed." And I'm like, "I really don't other that what I read in the text."

And he said, "Tares and wheat, they have the same head. You can't really tell the difference when they grow in the field." He goes, "But if you pluck a head of wheat and you kind of rub it out you'll see that the seeds or the fruit of that wheat will come out in the palm of your hand."

"If you take a tare, which looks very similar to a head of wheat and put it in your hand and rub it out, there is no fruit, there is no seed that comes from it." And he goes, "But the challenge is that they look identical in the field. And if you go tramping through that field to pull out the tares, you'll destroy the wheat."

That's what Jesus said. The servants said, "Should we pull up the tares?" And He goes, "No, if you do that you're going to end up destroying or pulling up the wheat as well. Let them both grow together. Until the harvest." Which is the second return. And at that time, Jesus the Master, Jesus the Farmer, will come and He'll separate the tares from the wheat. He'll burn the tares and He'll put the wheat in the barn.

So, here's the moral of the story. Alright? Here's the moral of the story: be a wheat and not a weed. That's bad English but that is good theology. See both the darkness and the light are going to get ramped up at the exact same time. And what that should be is an opportunity for the light to shine all the brighter. When does the light work best? In the dark.

So, He says wheat and tares are going to grow up at the exact same time. You're not going to be able to fully tell the difference. But He knows and one day He'll separate it out. And ultimately, we can have confidence in this, that the light wins.

And I say that, not as a matter of pride. It's a matter of fact that when you walk into a dark room and you put on the light, the light always wins. It overcomes the darkness. There isn't a corner of the room where the light can't get to. So, it overcomes and overwhelms the darkness.



As a church we are to be a city on a hill, a light in a dark place, awakened until Jesus returns. That means that as things get ramped up that we, as Christ followers, need to be alert, discerning, courageous, loving, gracious, never letting go of the truth.

And as we wrap up this initiative what better place to go in Scripture over the next four weekends than in the book of Acts? The book of Acts was part two of Luke's writing. Luke wrote the gospel of Luke and then he wrote the historical record of the first century church as it got started the day of Pentecost.

So, Luke picks up right after Jesus' resurrection and ascension and he jumps right into the day of Pentecost and the early accounts of the first century church. And the book of Acts has a bias toward action. You can even hear it in the word of the title of the book: Acts: A C T S. It's all about the actions of the first century church. And so, I'm going to pick it up in chapter 1, starting in verse 4. Look at what it says here. It says:

"On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command. Do not leave Jerusalem," Jerusalem was home base, "but wait..."

That's kind of interesting. At the beginning of a book filled with action Jesus says, "Wait. Don't get too far out ahead of yourself. Don't get over your skis, wait":

"for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about."

He's talking about the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit had not yet manifested Himself, had not yet come. In fact, Jesus told the disciples He was getting ready to go away and they said, "Don't go away. Don't go away. We want to continue to do this with you." And He goes, "No, no, no. Better for the One who is going to be in you than for Me to be with you." He's talking about the Holy Spirit.

So, He says here, "Hey, guys. Don't take any sort of action until you wait for the gift of the Holy Spirit." Picking it back up in the text again:

"For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized," in other words, you're going to have an encounter, "with the Holy Spirit. Then they gathered around him and asked him, 'Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?'"

Now, we can look at their question and be like, "Oh, silly disciples." But it's a good question. They are like, "Hey, is this Kingdom that you are talking about is this coming immediately? Is this coming in a few days?" And Jesus said to them: "...it is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority."



Translation: Don't get too caught up in when Jesus will return, just be ready for Him to return. Because your fascination with His return could, ironically, become an idol that takes you of course from the mission. Don't get so caught up thinking about how or when He's going to return and then you take your eyes off of the mission He's given you. You just be ready. And then he goes, "But as you are waiting,":

"...you will receive" something that is given to you, granted to you, here's that word again, "power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses..."

That's just another word for testifying to what you've seen, heard, and experienced. And notice the sequence here:

"in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight." Acts 1:4-9 (NIV)

Now whether that's the first time that you've heard that passage or the 100th time, I want you to notice one thing and then I want you to think about another thing.

Here's the first thing. I want you to notice the urgency in which it was written. There is urgency written all over it. The thread line through the whole book of Acts is action.

The second thing I want you to notice is, I want to read verse 8 again. I think it is easy for us to kind of read verse 8 and then think about it like, "This is talking about somebody else. It's talking about the church or it's talking about some other group of people."

I want you to personalize verse 8. I want you to read it for you. Think about your life right now, whoever you are right now. Whether you are a student, whether you are an entrepreneur, whether you own a business, a CEO or an FTI (first time intern), whether you're a stay at home parent—it doesn't matter. Whatever you give 40 plus hours of your week to right now, I want you to personalize verse 8.

You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you. And you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all of Judea, Samaria, to the ends of the earth. God wants to give you power. Did you know that?



Many of us are living anemic lives as Christ followers. In the podcast last week Pastor Ed talked about how he was challenged when somebody said, "Hey, at Christmas do you open every single gift that's got your name on it?" And he was like, "Yeah, of course. I can't wait to open every gift. In fact, I've never leave a gift unopened that has my name on it." And he was like, "Yeah, but here this calls the Holy Spirit a gift and many of us have left it unopened."

And if you've given your life to Jesus, He's got more power available to you. And we might be a little bit scared about that word power but power is not amoral. Power is kind of like money. It's not good or bad in and of itself. It's what you do with it that makes it good or bad. So, power in the hands of the sinful and wicked—people suffer. Power in the hands of the righteous—people flourish.

In Proverbs, chapter 29, verse 2 it says this:

"When the godly are in authority, the people rejoice. But when the wicked are in power, they groan." (NLT)

So, using power for the wrong reasons is sinful, but wielding it for the right reasons is a biblical command. And as followers of Jesus, we should never clamor or aspire for power for self-platforming, but we should seek to be empowered by the Holy Spirit. In fact, the Bible calls that a gift. And we do it for the fame of His name and the good of all people.

And Acts 1 is saying, "Bear witness to who Jesus is and what He has done beginning, sequentially in: Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth. Do you know what that is saying? Beginning at home, then at church, in your city, your region, country, and around the world.

I want you to personalize this. And I've got this graphic to kind of help you. You might want to take a picture of it with your phone.

Home/Home Campus — Jerusalem

Near/Far from Jesus — Judea

Opposed to me/Opposed to them — Samaria

Around the world — Ends of the Earth

When Jesus says Jerusalem the application for us today would be like your home and your home campus. Wherever you are primarily worshipping.



Judea would be like your greater community, your workplace. Maybe it's the city. It's to people who are near to you relationally but they are far from Jesus. How we would say it around here is: your one. So, like when Jesus said the shepherd leaves the 99 to go and find the one, that how serious we are about leading people to Jesus. So, when we say your one, that's what we are talking about. In your Judea, people who are near to you but they are far from God.

I'm going to spend a little more time on each of these, but Samaria that would be people who are opposed to you and, quite honestly, you are opposed to them. And they are opposed to Jesus. That's maybe the most difficult out of all of these.

And then the last: the ends of the earth. That would be the world. That we would pay attention to what God is doing around the nations.

So, if we were to break this down (you can leave that graphic up for just a little bit longer) your Jerusalem, primarily first and foremost should be your home. It's like a mini church. That's the reason why in the qualifications for elders they always talk about this: above reproach, husband of one wife, take care of stuff at home. That's your first church.

Some of you may be single adults and it's like you and a cat. Congratulations. That's going to be a lot easier. It's going to be a lot easier. Alright? Keep that cat in line. Keep your discipleship journey going. Alright? That's going to be easy. That's what I'm talking about.

Whatever home looks like. Maybe it's a dorm room. But out from that, that would be like your local church or maybe your home campus, wherever you are invested into.

Can I just look right into the camera right now and say, "Jerusalem is the Fishers campus." I'm talking directly to you right now. You are in that part of town that seems to have everything and the reason why it seems to have everything is because you guys have everything. You guys have some of the greatest restaurant chains, you've got Top Golf. You've also got the traffic to go along with it, so we don't envy that.

But, listen. Because there is so much abundance and so many things to do listen, the people in your Jerusalem they may have all these things around them but that does not mean that they have what matters most. So, you remember that and you bear witness to where that can be found.



Plainfield—you guys on the west side, you just kind of assume that everybody on the west side already goes to church because there is a church on every single corner, but that does not mean that they've met Jesus or have been awakened to the power of the Holy Spirit. There is a difference, you show them, from a semi-regular church attender who is religious in name only and a Spirit filled Christ follower living on mission. There is a difference. You show them.

Downtown—you guys are reaching people in the heart of our city when everyone told us when we launched Downtown that it wouldn't work. And every weekend whenever I read the reports and see what is going on Downtown I go, "Huh. It's working." Man, you guys continue to be a light right in the heart of our city. And you represent Jesus as well, because what happens there will filter out.

Carmel—you guys live in an area of high influence and high material possessions but that does not mean that people are not hurting and looking for hope. Because with the flashy cars, and the outfits, and the square footage, people are spiritually bankrupt. You show them what it looks like to be rich toward God.

Midtown—you're located in an area of the city that, arguably, just has the most character and personality. And what God is doing to reach people in that neighborhood from various backgrounds and walks of life is miraculous and incredible. And every time I step foot on your campus it is so warm and contagious. You continue to be a light in that neighborhood.

And then we come to Northwest. Man, Northwest you are just a mutt. You just come from all over, man. You just come from all over. And, in fact... By the way, when we built this location it took us a good five to 10 years to find this location. There were all kinds of obstacles. God led us to a piece of property over in another area that, honestly, fell through in the last minute. I'm so glad it did. Because it brought us up here because God was positioning us because He knew our vision and our future.

And when we moved up here there was nothing, man. If you were to walk out the front door of Northwest and do a 360 18 years ago, it was just corn fields everywhere. Now you do that, building and construction and people and neighborhoods are popping up all over.

God knew where we needed to be. And our proximity to the interstate has made us regional. I don't know why but we have people drive from more than an hour away to be at this campus. And this is the sending campus and our broadcast campus. It's your Jerusalem.



And, by the way, I'm really excited to announce to you that through Awaken we've got another campus. Our seventh campus is going to be launching in 2026 in Westfield. So, we are super excited about the Westfield campus that is coming.

We've already got a campus pastor on the team, Will, and his wife Maddy, Huberty. Apparently Will and Maddy's fan club decided to be here today. And they deserve every ounce of that. Amazing, amazing couple.

They are already on the ground building a team. If you want to be a part—if you have an interest in being a part of the Westfield campus, or part of the start team, you can go to the app and get all of that information.

Honestly, I just want to say this to you as a church. Westfield has presented some of the most significant challenges of any of the campuses that we've had to date in trying to find a location. It was easier to go downtown than Westfield. And we had a temporary portable set up and tear down kind of a deal secured. That fell through this last week. We've had offers on two or three different pieces of land, complications with all of them.

As of right now, we are not fully quite sure where we are going to go for an August launch. But we are going to forge ahead by faith and trust that God is going to open those doors. Can I beckon the prayers of all of our campuses to pray that God would move in a significant way right now and that He would open up the right place.

I'm just going to trust. Like I said it took us five to 10 years to get to the right location here. I'm just going to trust that God knows what He is doing. It's like, "Hey, that's not where I want you. I've got something else."

And, by the way, maybe I'm talking to somebody who, I don't know, hypothetically, has some land in Westfield. Love to hear from you. Love to hear from you. That may be happening.

Hey, I also want to talk about our Fishers campus because this is part of Awaken. We launched Fishers a couple of years ago. We bought an existing church building and I want to show you this picture. The part of the building that is on the far left, that was the existing church building we bought.

And Fishers has grown from over 200 to over 800 in the last couple of years. So, everything to the right is a brand-new auditorium. And we're just trusting that God's going to double the Fishers location when we can get in there. Already they've had 128 baptisms since their launch. Man, God is doing some incredible things in our Fishers campus.



Thank you for your generosity. Super excited about what God is doing. Can I just ask you, man, who or what is your Jerusalem? Who are your local people? Who are the people who are the people who just quicken the sense of urgency in your life—they've got to know Jesus.

Now, Jesus doesn't stop there. He goes on and He says and in all of Judea. And Judea was the broader region outside of Jerusalem. The region around it. So, that could be people in your workplace. That could be people in your community, your neighborhood. Can I say it this way? The people who are near to you relationally, just still far from Jesus.

And we have a heart not only for our entire city but we have a heart for our state. In fact, in 10 years our church will celebrate its 200th birthday. And we have a vision to plant a campus a year up until our 200th birthday.

Here's just a map that I'll show you. Everything in green is where we currently have a campus, everything in gray is where we are praying that God might open up a door, an opportunity, including all of the university towns around our state because those are the locations that are shaping the mindset of the next generation. We have a desire to go, man. So, we are excited about it.

And then Jesus mentions Samaria. Scholars always say that Samaria is like sort of the unexpected—they wouldn't have been expecting Jesus to say Samaria. So, when Jesus said Jerusalem they were like, "Yeah. We can always do that, that's home." Judea, "We totally get that. That's the neighboring areas around us."

And then He says Samaria and they would have been like, "Say what?" I don't think you fully understand this. If you think that we've got division and differences in our society today: politically, socially, ethically whatever you haven't seen nothing yet because the Samaritans were hated and the Samaritans hated them. You just need to understand. Jesus said, "I want you to be My witnesses to your sworn enemies."

The people who when you are the airport and you are getting ready to board a plane and you are looking around the little seating area and you mutter under your breath, "I hope my seat isn't next to that person." That person. That's what He's talking about.

And He says, "Man, you develop a heartbroken posture toward these people who are your sworn enemies." You don't see eye to eye with them on anything. And Jesus says, "I'm asking you to be My witnesses to that group of people." And the question is not just can you do it; the question is are you willing to do it because God is than able.



So, last weekend I was in New York City from Friday to Wednesday. I had some board meetings at the beginning of the week for a church planting organization that we are a part of. And so, my wife and I took our oldest daughter, Campbell, and we decided to go out a few days early to spend a long weekend in New York because she's engaged to be married in the spring.

And ever since she was six or seven, anytime I would have meetings in New York she would go along with me and we would go to some Broadway plays. She loves Broadway.

So, we were like, "Hey, this might be one of our last opportunities before she gets married to take a trip just the three of us. So we did. We went out and saw a couple of plays. Hit some great restaurants. I've got to move on because if I don't stop talking about it I'm going to start crying.

We stayed through the weekend. And on Sunday I hopped into an Uber and ubered up to the Upper West Side to attend church at Church of the City, which is a friend of mine, John Tyson's church. You might be familiar with him. And I was really excited to see it. I hadn't been there yet to worship.

I got there a couple of minutes late and so when I walked in it was already packed. And it's a rented facility; they do set up and tear down. An usher had to come find me and he brought me down, kind of halfway through, and then kind of wedged me into this little seat, it was like the end pews, next to somebody I didn't know. I was honestly uncomfortably close.

The worship was dynamic and Spirit filled. And there were people of different generations and different ethnicities. It was powerful, the teaching was biblical and it was uncompromising and I could feel the Spirit of God moving within New York City.

And at one point in the service they said, "Hey, why don't you take the next four to five minutes turn to the person sitting next to you, and have a conversation." You guys don't like it when we just say, "Say hi." So, the next time you curse us under your breath it could be worse. Next time we might say, "Hey, man. Have a conversation."

So, anyway I turned to the young lady sitting next to me. She was in her 20s. and I was like, "Hey, my name is Aaron." She said, "My name is Andrea." And I said, "Do you live in the city?" and she said, "No, I live in Hollywood." I was like, "Oh, that's quite a commute."



And she said, "Oh, I'm actually in the city for the weekend. I'm visiting some friends." And I said, "Do you have a church in Hollywood?" And she said, "Yeah, I do, actually." And she told me the name of the church and I've heard of it. And I watched her the rest of the service. She had her Bible open. She was taking notes. She had her hands raised in worship.

And I was sitting there thinking to myself, "Here is a Spirit filled, Bible teaching, courageous, loving church in the heart of New York City, which is the modern Babylon of our day." And I thought to myself, "You know what? I think we can handle Indy." If God can do it there man, God can do it here.

I love what the prophet Jeremiah says to the Israelites as they find themselves in Babylon. Notice what it says. It says:

"This is what the Lord of Heaven's Armies, the God of Israel, says to all the captives he has exiled to Babylon from Jerusalem:"

Now if you didn't know what was coming in verse 5, listen. The Israelites had been taken as slaves, ripped from their home in Jerusalem, trying to live for God in a very pagan place. And you would think that he would say, "Rise up and riot and revolt and escape."

No, what he said, here's God's word to them through Jeremiah:

"Build homes, and plan to stay. Plant gardens, and eat the food they produce. Marry and have children. Then find spouses for them so that you may have many grandchildren. Multiply! Do not dwindle away! And work for the peace and prosperity of the city where I sent you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, for its welfare will determine your welfare." Jeremiah 29:4-7 (NLT)

In other words, the Israelites saw themselves as exiles. God saw them as missionaries. And so he says, "You plan to stay and build homes for the good of the city. And that city happened to be Babylon, which was the most wicked city in the world at the time. In fact, so much so, that we talk about the spirit of Babylon is alive and well today.

What does this mean for us? This means that we thoughtfully engage. We don't retreat. We don't shrink back. We don't get angry. We don't throw punches. We become courageous, but lovingly hold on to grace we hold on to truth. We don't let go of either. And we speak into the ideas that shape culture. Why? Because when the righteous lean in, society flourishes.



Guys, I just believe that the Bible speaks into this culture rather than the culture speaks into our Bibles. And it speaks into it with the gospel message. The gospel message is much, much more than what many of us end up reducing it to, which is, "Hey, God loves everybody." Well, of course God loves everybody. That is true. But the gospel is so much more than that. It's not just, "Well Jesus wants us to love our neighbors." That is true, it is that. It is so much more than that.

Well, what is it? Let me just read it for you. I think, oftentimes, we have a tendency to emphasize certain parts of the gospel and under emphasize others and then we get division. So, let me just read this for you. Here's the gospel message. This is what we are trying to advance.

God has provided a way to salvation through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, Romans 1:16. Christ, who Himself is God incarnate, satisfied God's wrath, and paid the penalty for our sin on the cross so that whoever believes in Him would not perish but have eternal life, John 3:16.

The gospel is the message of deliverance, not from earthly difficulties or circumstances, but from the power of sin in our hearts and the penalty of sin in hell, Revelation 21:1-8.

It's not self-help advice for a more comfortable life or a series of steps to winning God's favor. But rather it is the uniquely Christian message that salvation is an un-earned gift from God, Ephesians 2:1-10.

It is all about what God has done to reconcile us to Him so that we might be able to stand justified before Him, despite the sins that we commit against Him every day, 2 Corinthians 5:17-20.

The proper response to the gospel is repentance from sin and faith in the sufficient work of Christ, Mark 1:15. To live faithfully in light of the gospel is to endure and believe in Jesus to the end, Matthew 24:13-14. To carry the Good News of salvation to the lost, Matthew 28:19-20. And to contend for the faith once delivered to all of the saints by standing against any doctrine or ideology that adds to or takes away from that message, Jude 1:3.

That's the light of the gospel. And our vision, unapologetically, is to take ground for the Kingdom of Jesus. So, I want to urge you to thoughtfully engage, I'm out of time so let me just read one last part of Acts 1:8 and then I'm going to ask you a question and then I'm going to bring it to a close. Acts 1:8:

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem," your home, "and in all Judea" your neighborhood, "and Samaria," the people you can't stand, "and to the ends of the earth." (NIV)



That means that you care about more than what's been happening in your social media. That means that you care about more than what's happening in your home city, your home state, even your home country. That means that you get your heads up and you are looking around at what God is doing around the world.

Guys, right now we've got to have a heart for the nations. There is genocide that is happening right now in Nigeria that not enough people are talking about. Christian brothers and sisters are being massacred by the thousands. Our hearts should break and we should be praying and asking God to intervene. That means that we care about that.

It means that maybe you need to say, "You know what? By faith I need to sign up for a Go Trip and I need to go on a short-term mission trip. If any of you have never been on a mission trip, it will open your eyes. It's like spiritual smelling salts.

There is something about the voice of God that gets amplified when you find yourself in a culture that is unfamiliar and uncomfortable. And it's not that God starts speaking when you go on a mission trip, I think the other things that drown out His voice get turned down and you can hear Him more clearly.

So, maybe you might want to go and sign up for a Go Trip to Kenya. I'm going to Kenya in March. Maybe some of you want to jump on a trip. You can go to our app and find all of our Go Trips.

Right now, through your generosity, we have outreach partners all over the world who are trying to provide relief to those who are hurting. In fact, our partner, Convoy of Hope, is boots on the ground in Jamaica and we've already sent them resources to provide relief to those who have lost homes in the wake of the hurricane in Jamaica. We'll continue to.

This means that right now with the SNAP program kind of up in the air with the government shut down, not really knowing what is going to happen, all of that is in limbo, there are lots and lots of people who are going to find themselves in immediate need right away.

Proactively this last week we already sent thousands of dollars to our partner Shepherd Community Center here in the city to be ready to go to be what the church has always meant to be, to provide resources, food, and needs in the hands of those who desperately need it. And every campus, every campus is ready to go with gift cards and grocery cards for people who are going to have needs for those things.



Very lovingly, can I just say this to you? For those who may be skeptical in your Samaria who say, "Hey, is that mega church that you go to even aware of the need? Are they doing anything?" You can very lovingly say, "Yes, they are." And we will continue to. Because we are to be the light of the world.

Man, I've got to land the plane. I can tell I've been off of preaching for a month. So, let me just offer this to you, one last thing. Some of you are here today and you do not have relationship with Jesus. And you are not guaranteed another minute of life.

I prayed with a couple right over here last night at the Saturday night service, which was pretty packed, by the way. The man is coming to the end of his battle with ALS, is in a wheelchair, going on hospice tomorrow. And he looked at me and he said, "I'm so grateful for the gift of ALS because it's been the one thing that has given me eyes to see Jesus most clearly. And God has used it to grow my spiritual journey more than anything else."

Guys, I felt about this big [an inch] when it comes to my problems and the things I complain about.

You are not guaranteed another minute of life. If you are not right with God, get right with God today. Invite Jesus and the power of His presence into your life. You can do that by confessing your sins, turning away from them, and submitting everything to King Jesus.

You may still have a lot of questions and still have issues. Invite Jesus to help you sort through the questions and issues. You will never get answers without the Spirit of God. Some of you are waiting to get answers before you give your life to Jesus. It doesn't work that way. You give your life to Jesus, then He provides the answers for your journey.

Here's the next thing. Some of you are Christians living an anemic life. You need the power of the Holy Spirit and that's what you need to pray for today. So, let me lead you in prayer.

Father, we come to You today. Please awaken us because now is the time. And I pray that there would be a whole bunch of people who would invite the presence of the Holy Spirit into their life through the confession of sins and repentance and become a new creation, stepping out of the darkness and into the light.



And I pray for a whole bunch of us. Maybe they could relate to what I was saying about my journey four or five years ago and they are asleep at the wheel right now and they need the power of the Holy Spirit to awaken them to what You want to do in this world right now. Because, honestly, we've been more fearful than we have been courageous. We've been more tied up over just the darkness in the world rather than to focus on being the light.

So, Father would You please empower us by the Holy Spirit to lean into this cultural moment with the light of Jesus Christ. We ask this in Your name. and everybody says: Amen and Amen.

Would you please stand to your feet as we worship together?

