

**Aaron Brockett:**

Hey Traders Point family. I hope you are having a fantastic summer. And over the course of the summer months, our team is praying towards the fall. The fall is typically the time when more and more people get back into their routines, kids get back into school, and we're just anticipating that God's going to bring more and more people back to our campuses physically. Many of them it's going to be the first time they've ever stepped foot on any one of our campuses. And we want them to have a great experience, and I want you to be a part of it. So would you consider praying along with us for the fall ministry season, as well as praying asking God for ways that you might be a part of it. We'd love to have you serve in one of our ministry areas. If so, you can go to [tpcc.org/serve](http://tpcc.org/serve) to get all the information and to sign up.

Well, today I am really excited to introduce to you our next guest in our summer message series. Rusty George is the lead pastor at Real Life Church in Southern California, a multi-site church that has become one of the fastest growing churches in America. Rusty is an author, he's a global speaker and a leader. He and his wife, Lori, had two daughters, Lindsay and Sidney. And Rusty and I go way back. I always just appreciated the way that Rusty thinks, the way that he communicates, and just the way that he encourages. You're going to love him. So to all of our campuses, would you please join me in giving a warm Traders Point welcome to our friend, Rusty George.

**Rusty George:**

Hey, Traders Point. Hey, it's such an honor to be with you. This is just incredible. I have known about Traders Point for many, many years clear back to the days with Howard and a friendship I've had with Jeff Krajewski for many, many years, and then into my friendship with Aaron. And I've just heard all the incredible things that you guys have done, not just here in the Indianapolis area, but also around the world. And it's just an honor to be with you. And I just want to say to you, and Aaron did not ask me to say this, but I just want to say to you, thank you for allowing your lead pastor some time to get some rest and to recharge and get ready for this next season of ministry.

As it was for all of us, COVID was just a very, very difficult time. And a lot of pastors right now are suffering from what we call decision fatigue, because there were so many decisions that needed to be made. And for Aaron to get just a breath of fresh air and to come back energized is only going to make you an even better church than you already are. And so pray for him and celebrate him as he returns in a few weeks. But because he's gone, I get to be here. And I'm really, really honored to do that. I live in California and I work at a church called Real Life Church, which is just north of Los Angeles. And I am one of those kids that grew up in the Midwest and said, I will visit California, but I will never live in California. Be careful when you

tell God your plans, he has other ideas, but I grew up in Kansas and I like every other kid growing up in Kansas, just wanted to get out of Kansas.

And I made it out to Missouri, made it, baby steps. So I got to Missouri. I went to school at Ozark Christian College, where Aaron went as well. And then I then went to Lexington, Kentucky, where I served at a church there. And I got a chance then 18 years ago to go out to this brand new church, it was only a couple of years old, meeting in a movie theater in Valencia, California. Now, when you make a move like that, you learn a lot about yourself. You learn a lot about your family, my wife and I had a newborn. She was about nine months old at the time. Now we have two daughters and the oldest is 18 and 16, which is crazy how fast it goes, but moving out to California with a nine month old, you have these assumptions and these hopes and these dreams, and then quickly you begin to figure out things are a little bit different.

And I learned that in a lot of different ways and one in particular comes to mind, and it was right after we moved to California. We had chosen this little area of town that was just this neat little community that was also around a community pool. And everybody would converge on the community pool during the weekends, just to hang out and talk to each other and play in the pool and all that, and I thought, this is a great way to get to know people. I said to my wife, Lori, hey, let's go down to the pool this weekend. We'll get to know some of the neighbors. We can invite them to church. What a great way for a new church and a new pastor to get to know some other people. She said sounds great. The problem is, you don't have a swimsuit. Well, I'll go get one. Well, here's the deal. When you go to get a swimsuit in June, they're already gone. Okay. That's just the way it is in California. They start swimming in February, or something.

So I have to go out to the mall. I'm looking all over the place. I find this one store, it's got one suit and it's all they've got and it's bright orange. All right. And I'm not a Denver Broncos fan, let's just clarify that right now, but I decided I got to buy this suit. So I get the suit and I take it home, and I get suited up on the weekend and we get our daughter all ready to go, we got all the little toys for her in the pool, and we get out to the pool early and I'm in the water swimming around with her, and I hand her over to my wife, and then I'm out talking to people. How are you doing? Good to see you. I get back in the water, playing with our daughter. And I sit there on the steps next to my wife with our little nine-month old. And my wife looks over at me and she says, Rusty, what is all over your suit?

I said, what do you mean? I looked down and apparently this bright orange suit had images that would appear in the water. Once the suit got wet graphics began to unfold. And friends, I wish I could tell you it was crosses and doves and worship songs, it was topless women. I was horrified. I'd been out walking around, how you doing? New pastor at the church, Real Life Church, clothing optional, come on out and join us. I couldn't believe it. I thought, what in the world? When I picked the suit out there was no warning, may contain porn, or anything like that. So I got out of the pool, I got my towel around me. We packed up our boxes and moved. It was stunning. You ever had that buyer's remorse before you buy something and you think, man, this is not at all what I thought it was going to be. And I've had that with clothes. I had that with cars, you buy a car and you think this is going to be great, it's not.

Had this with Airbnbs. You roll in, man, this is not at all like the pictures. You've had this with vacations before, you show up and you're like, this is not at all like the website made it look.

You've had this with relationships, you get married and think, wow, this is not at all like the Hallmark movie we saw, right? This is a little bit difficult. You've had buyer's remorse, I've had buyer's remorse, and we've had those moments where we thought this is different than I thought it was going to be, and can we just be honest. Haven't we all once or twice in our life had that with God? In fact, the reality is, there are many of you sitting right here, or watching online, that you're here, but you're skeptical, because you've had a bad experience where you prayed and you ask God to do the incredible and the impossible and the powerful, and he didn't.

And there's something in you as there has been in me that makes you wonder, do you have buyer's remorse? Maybe you showed up for Easter one year around here and you decided to get baptized, and you heard all the stories of how everybody's life was changed after baptism and you just are wondering, when's that going to happen to me? Maybe you've prayed big prayers for God to heal somebody, or God to change somebody, or God to get one of your kids into college. And it just didn't happen. And there's something about you, and something about me, that when these things happen we think, either God is not good, or God is not great, or maybe I'm just not doing this right.

As a pastor, I stand around the lobby and I talk to people after our services and they come up and they talk to me, and they want me to pray for them, which I'm honored to do. And I'll ask them things like, well, this big test that you have coming up, or this doctor's visit that you have coming up, are you praying about this? And they'll say, oh, I tried, but it didn't work. Would you pray for me? And there's something inside of them that's the same thing it's inside of me that wonders, what are we supposed to do in order to get God what we need him to do? Are there magic words? I think about that old movie, A Few Good Men, remember that movie where Tom Cruise is talking to Jack Nicholson, and he's asking him, I need these papers for Private Williams Santiago and his flight records.

And Jack Nicholson's character is just so angry about this, he says, I'll give you the flight records, but you have to ask me nicely. Cruise is just stunned by this juvenile behavior, and he has to say, pretty please, to get these forms. And I wonder if there's times when you feel like I do, and that is, God, am I not using the magic words? Am I not use it enough Hail Marys? Am I not perfect enough? Am I not passionate enough? What do I got to do to get you to move? So I did what many of you do when you have a question about God, you start asking other people and you start googling it, and you go to Amazon and you look for books on it. And I've found a lot of books about how to pray and what to say when you pray, and how to prepare to pray, but I found very few on what to do after you pray.

What do you do when you hang up the phone and there's silence? What do you do when you send that text and the three little bubbles come up and then they go away, and you feel like God is not responding to your prayers? And so I just started a deep study on this for a couple of years. And I started going back to the life of Jesus, and I noticed that when people would come and ask him for things, that was their prayer. And Jesus' response to him, or to all these people, was very rarely, you got it, or not today. Often it involved them having to do something after they asked, and many times what they did after they prayed had everything to do with the answer they got for their prayers.

So I just began to discover that there's some things we got to do on the way, and eventually the miracle meets us in the journey. And so Traders Point is going to push this out over the next week. I decided to put all this in a book called, *After Amen: What to Do While Waiting on God*, we've talked through this at our church, and we had a lot of fun just looking at these seven things God seems to tell us to do after we hang up the phone. And if you're not a reader, I've got it on audible, you can listen to it that way, might kill some time when you're driving somewhere this summer. But I wanted to just share one of these things with you, because I've found this to be revolutionary in my prayer life. Every time I start to feel a little bit of buyer's remorse, like God's not coming through on his end for me, I go back to these things that he has asked me to do while I wait.

So we're going to take a look at this one story that I think just sums up so much of it so well. And maybe this is a story you've heard a hundred times before, maybe this'll be brand new for you, but when I was digging into this, I found some interesting things in this I had never noticed before that really have a lot to say about your prayer life and my prayer life. Let me set the scene for you. It's about 30AD. Jesus has not gone public yet with who he is. The only people that know that he's the son of God are his mother, Mary, his earthly father, Joseph, is dead by this time. And then there's his cousin, John the Baptist who was telling everybody about Jesus, but people think he's just crazy.

And then Jesus has his disciples that are following him around mainly because they think he's got really cool stories and does really cool magic tricks. And so they're following and they're watching, and they're listening, and they're trying to figure out who is this guy? What is he up to? And in the middle of all of this, Jesus gets an invitation to a wedding. Now, back then, this was an honor and everybody loved to go to weddings. Today when you get a wedding invitation, you're like, which college football game am I missing today? All right. I do not want to go to this wedding. Are you kidding me? How do we even know these people? Right? So back then a wedding was such a momentous event it would last for weeks. And as a result, people would all bring stuff to the wedding, like a potluck and they couldn't wait to get there. And Jesus says that he and his disciples would go.

Well, it's a good thing they did, because when they get there, his mother, Mary, has been there for a while, helping prepare things and she's counting what's going on. And she comes up to Jesus and she says, hey, son, I think they don't have enough wine. Now that may not be a big deal around here, it's a huge deal in California, but it would have been an even bigger deal, and even bigger deal back then, because people were going to be there for days on end. In fact, some scholars say that there could have actually been a lawsuit against this couple for not having enough wine at the wedding. And Jesus' mom comes to Jesus and says, they don't have enough wine. This is her prayer. This is her ask, and take a look at what Jesus says. Dear woman, that's not our problem. Let's think about that for a second. Okay.

This doesn't make it onto a lot of those pictures of Jesus holding sheep that you put up in the nursery, a bumper sticker. Okay. [inaudible 00:14:51] Mother's day. Anything like that. This is a little bit stunning here, because you might be thinking, that sounds rude. If I were to say to my mom, dear woman, that's not my problem. It would not go well for me, and all of you kids right now thinking, well, Jesus said it, just hang on. Okay. Because back then this phrase, dear woman, that meant ma'am, it was a sign of honor and respect, but also a, you know what? That

wasn't on our list of things to bring. We brought other things. We didn't bring that. And, oh, by the way, my time has not yet come. It is not yet my time to show everybody who I am. And then what happens next is phenomenal.

Mary, I don't know how long she stared at Jesus. I don't know if she raised the one eyebrow, like you better, anything like that. Now the next thing is, his mother turns to the servants and she says, do whatever he tells you, do whatever he tells you to do. We could stop right there, couldn't we? Do whatever Jesus tells you to do. Sometimes when I perform a wedding, I'll walk through this passage and I'll look at the bride and groom and I'll say, listen, you want to know the secret to a great marriage? Do whatever Jesus tells you to do. Love like Jesus, forgive like Jesus, serve like Jesus, do whatever Jesus tells you to do. And I don't know how much time elapsed between this statement to the servants and what happens next, but Mary doesn't even beg and plead to Jesus, she just looks at the servants and says, do whatever he tells you to do. And then she leaves.

And a period of time goes by and John who was there watching all this, writes this down, look what he says. Standing nearby were six stone water jars used for Jewish ceremonial washing. Now let's stop there for a second. This is huge. The symbolism here we can unpack for days, because in Jewish tradition, and in Jewish custom, they would have these ceremonial washing basins by wherever you would enter into eat and you would put your hands in them, you would pour them over your hands, you would clean your hands and your arms, and then you would wipe your face off and everything, because you were not just cleaning yourself up for dinner, you were preparing yourself to be in the presence of God.

And Jesus is about to use these ceremonial washing jars to turn, spoiler alert, water into wine, and wine is what Jesus used at the Last Supper when he is about to cleanse us all from our sin, the parallels here are amazing, there's an old covenant, but there's about to be a new one, but in the meantime let's use these to answer someone's prayer. These six water basins are over there, these are big, each one could hold 20 to 30 gallons. These are heavy already. And Jesus told the servants, fill the jars with water, fill the jars with water. Now, when you and I hear that, we think, okay, so we're going to go get the garden hose and we'll put it in there, we'll turn it on, we'll wait and then we'll do the next one. Now they didn't have that. This was, you pick that thing up, you drag it down to the river, you fill it up, now it weighs roughly 300 pounds and several of you will carry it back in the heat, dress for a wedding, six times.

And these guys have to take these jars all the way down and fill them up six different times, and they don't stop. I'm sure there were moments when they are filling this up, they're looking at each other like, why are we doing this? Who is this guy? I didn't want to come to this wedding. It's my wife's second niece's friend's mother. I don't even know these people and I'm stuck here, we're missing the big game. And now I'm dragging around, filling up all these jars. Are you kidding? But then look what happens next? When the jars had been filled, that is so key. Not after the first jar, not the moment they put it into the river, not on the way back it began to splash out and they begin to figure out, oh, this is different, but when the jars had been filled, the miracle had been complete, and Jesus says, now dip some out, take it to the master of ceremonies.



And so the servants followed his instructions. There it is again, do whatever Jesus tells you to do. And when the master of ceremonies tasted the water that was now wine, not knowing where it had come from, though, of course, the servants knew, he called the bridegroom over and he said, a host always serves the best wine first. And then when everyone's had a lot to drink, he brings out the less expensive wine, but you have kept the best until now. This miraculous sign at Cana in Galilee was the first time Jesus revealed his glory, and look at this, and his disciples believed in him. The belief came after the miracle, and the miracle came after the work. Here's what we learned from this. God is faithful, not just while we wait, but while we work. You keep putting one foot in front of the other. You keep doing the last thing he told you to do. You keep doing the next right thing and the miracle meets you along the way.

Could it be? Could it be the frustration you have with God right now is simply due to the fact you're only on your fourth trip to the river. For many of us, God has said, go fill up these jars and there are six of them, or there's 10 of them, or there's 20 years of them, but you go and do this. And when the jars are filled, then you'll see the miracle. I love what pastor and author. Mark Batterson says, he says sometimes God is waiting to do the super until you do the natural. Ain't that good? We're all waiting for the supernatural in our lives, and God is saying, you do the natural, I'll do the super, we'll put them together and it'll be amazing. But in the meantime, I'm still at work, even though you wait, and even though you work. So here's what this means for us, that is that we keep working while we wait. You keep working while you wait.

You think about this. You know this to be true. If you're helping your kid get into college and she's 14 and she just passed her algebra exam, you don't say, that's it. We're going pro, taking you right to college. Let's go. You're done. No, no, no, no. You keep doing the work till you get to the point the colleges available. This is true in business, just because your store is doing well right now, you don't shut it down and open another one, you keep it going, and you slowly start another one. You know this with your career. Maybe you want to change careers. You keep working on the one you have until God opens the door for the next one. And the same thing is true in your relationships. You want your marriage to be better, you don't just take her out for a nice dinner and then just expect everything to be perfect, you keep doing the little things over and over and over again. And God is busy working while you who are working and waiting. And the miracle shows up along the way.

I know that was true for my mother-in-law. My in-laws were down in Florida when my father-in-law went away during the Korean War and she waited behind and she was invited by a next door neighbor to go with her to church. My mother-in-law had never been to church, but she said, okay, I'll go. And she just got ambushed by the grace of God. She gave her life over to Jesus after a period of time, got baptized and wrote her husband who was away at war and said, I've started going to church. And he wrote her back, that's fine for you, but I'll never go.

She didn't end the marriage. She didn't say all is lost. She just kept praying. And when he got home, she didn't hound him about it. She didn't make a big deal about it. Sunday morning came, she'd go to church, come home, continued on with the marriage, loved each other, served each other. And slowly, after a period of time, he started to ask questions about church. And then one day he said, could I go to church with you? And then he had that same experience of being ambushed by the grace of God. Now they've been married almost 60 years

and many of which have been in the church, simply because they decided to keep working while they waited.

Here's what I would encourage you with, for everybody who's waiting thinking I've got buyer's remorse with God, I prayed and it didn't work. What do I got to do to twist God's arm? How is this going to happen? I want you to fill in these blanks. God, I'd really like you to, what? Fix your marriage? Bring your kids back? Help somebody get into college? New career, new job? Physical healing in your life? But until then I will keep one. Maybe it's a relationship with Jesus. God, I don't have it all figured out, but I want to keep taking steps. God, I'm not sure if I understand all these things, but I want to keep moving forward. God I've been hurt by the church in the past, and this seems safe, but what if, but I'm going to keep moving ahead. God, I really, really want you to do this, but until then, I'll keep making my trips down to the river.

Several years ago, I went to CIY with our students at our church. We were there for a week and it was a powerful week, incredible stuff happened as many of you have experienced at CIY. Every night they would have a worship experience with the teaching moment. And they had an ongoing mission they were raising money for that, they were going to give money away too. And as the week was over with, the next morning we got up and we loaded back in the bus to drive six hours back home, about three hours into the trip we stopped at a McDonald's. There's nothing like pulling a huge bus of 200 kids into a McDonald's and seeing the look of terror on the staff's eyes.

And this bus just unloads upon this McDonald's and I wait till the end and I walk in and I think, I don't want to stand in line. And so I walk up to a kid that I know right in the middle of the line, his name's Ryan, and I hand Ryan 20 bucks and I say, Ryan, get me a number three, get yourself whatever you want, and I'll go sit down over here. He had this stunned look on his face. I just assumed he was completely taken back by my incredible generosity. Not so much. I went and sat down and Ryan came to me just a few minutes later and he gave me my food and my change, and he went over and sat with his friends, and a couple hours later on our bus trip back he came over and sat down next to me and he said, I got to tell you about what happened back there. I said, what's that?

He said last night during chapel, when they were talking about where all the money was going to go for this mission's project, I just felt like God was saying, give everything you have to this. And he said, I gave every last dime that I had and I had no money for lunch today. I said, let me get this straight. You gave all your money last night and you came in here and got in line? He said, yeah. And now I was the one that was stunned. Maybe what God's telling you today is get in line. Just keep marching ahead.

God is seldom early, but he's never late. God will meet you with that miracle when it is time. And before he does the super, he's waiting for you to do the natural, maybe for you that is to take the step of deciding to start pursuing Jesus. You can take that step around here very simply, just by texting the word Jesus to this number, 87221, you can do that right now from online, wherever you're watching, say, yeah, I'm going to take that next step. I don't have it all figured out. I don't understand it all. I make a lot of mistakes, but I know I got to do something, and I'm going to start moving ahead. Maybe you take that step today. Can I encourage you

Traders Point? Some of you are only on your fourth trip to the river, don't stop, because God is faithful. Let me pray for you.

God, thank you. Good, thank you that you are so faithful, so giving, so loving, so generous to us. Thank you that you're bigger than everything we could ever ask for, or imagine. And right now, God, we just want to present to you our broken hearts, our broken dreams, our buyer's remorse, everything that we feel knowing that you are faithful to walk with us through it all, that you are faithful, not just while we wait, but while we were. May this be another trip down to the river right now God. Use US God, change us God. May we be a huge impact for you in this community. And we pray all of this in Jesus' name. Amen.