

MESSAGE TRANSCRIPT //

UNBELIEVABLE GENEROSITY | SHOULDERS OF SAINTS

AARON BROCKETT | NOVEMBER 24, 2024

Well, it's so good to be with everybody today across all of our locations and those of you joining us online.

If you've got a Bible, go ahead and head over to Philippians, chapter 4. Philippians, chapter 4 is the passage that we're going to work through together today.

As you are finding that and settling in, I just want you to know that next weekend we begin a series of messages that we have a lot of fun with, and we look forward to every year at this time, called At the Movies.

And what we do in this series is we take a look at some of our most well-loved stories and connect them to the truth that is found in God's word, which is not a new thing.

Actually, Jesus did that all throughout His ministry when He taught the parables. He just told us about these eternal truths found in some earthly stories.

We do that every year right around this time. And I want you to understand really, primarily, what this series is about—this is a time for us to get externally focused and to think about those people who may be far from God who we need to invite.

Here's how we would say it. Who is your one? Who is that person or that group of people you need to invite that you've been praying for all year long that they would get connected to Jesus. This is the opportunity to invite them to come.

Here's how you do it. You don't just generally invite them to church, you invite them to come and sit with you. If you give a general invite... Man, if you've ever shown up to a new place and you don't know where to go or where to sit that can be really intimidating. But if you know somebody is going to be meeting you and they've saved a seat for you, it's an entirely different thing. So, I just want to encourage you to invite that person to come next weekend.

Due to copyright laws, we cannot show them online. So, you've got to be here in person. For our online crowd and those of you who live in various places around the nation we will have another series online for you.

And then invite people to come for our Christmas services. All of that is coming up next week. We're super excited about it.



Today we are wrapping up this message series that we've been in, this is week number four, called Shoulders Of Saints. And today is our mid-point commitment Sunday of something called Awaken.

If you are new to our church, Awaken is our two-year generosity vision initiative as a church. We are just asking God for some direction for the next handful of years in front of us as a church, really to do three things: Release the Church, Revive the City, Restore Hope to the World.

For those of you who are newer to our church, Awaken came out of a season where it was kind of a post COVID world, where things were beginning to calm down, get back to normal, whatever that means, and we were looking around going, "Okay, now what?"

And I don't know about you, I don't know if I'm speaking for anybody, but, man, 2020 and 2021 were two of the most confusing, challenging years of my life both personally and professionally. Am I alone in that? I know. Absolutely,

Those two years—I've heard them described this way, I think it's fitting, the dashboard that we looked at personally and professionally to kind of help us understand how we are doing, how we are tracking—during those years got blacked out. We just didn't know.

So, at home you didn't really know... I didn't really know how I was doing as a husband and as a dad. Kids were doing online classes and things were kind of going crazy. And the things that I normally looked to to say, "Hey, man. How am I doing?" I didn't know how to read them. The same thing is true in the ministry. I'm sure it was true at your work or your profession or whatever you do.

I was talking to a guy the other day on the phone, and he just started a company two years ago. And he said, "Yeah, during 2020 I didn't have a single sale for 12 months." And I'm sure maybe you faced significant challenges as well.

I was tired of preaching in this room to an empty room and a camera during that whole time not being able to gather together. We were in this massive crisis. And it felt like the wheels were coming off.

And at some point, as we slowly began to re-gather as a church, we realized, as leaders, that we were kind of treading water barely keeping our heads above water. We were playing defense when the Great Commission is offense.

We realized, "Wait a second. The Great Commission, Matthew 28, 'Go and make disciples,' that's true whether we are in crisis or not in a crisis." Matthew, chapter 11, "The kingdom of God is forcefully advancing," didn't give an exception like, "unless you're having a really bad time."

So, we began to circle up and were like, "Okay, now we need to reset our sails to cast some vision for the church because we've been treading water for too long.



That's what Awaken came out of. And God led us to this passage in Ephesians, chapter 5 where Paul writes these words starting in verse 14:

"Awake, O sleeper. Rise from the dead. And Christ will give you light.' So, be careful how you live. Don't live like fools, but like those who are wise." (NLT)

And, by the way, wisdom doesn't come in the form of a pill or a class, wisdom comes in the form of difficulty and trial. I wish it didn't. I wish there were an online course you could take and then, boom, you had wisdom. But wisdom comes from going through really difficult days and still standing on your feet. Verse 16:

"Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days. Don't act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants you to do." Ephesians, 5:13-17 (NLT)

That passage was profound. And out of that passage came our theme for the next couple of years of vision together for us as a church Awaken: Now is the time.

We've got to cease the moment now. This is our time in history. You are not here by mistake. God ordained the days of your life, that you would be living in these massive cultural shifts in this cultural moment that we are living in right now. Time is short. Eternity is long. People matter. And God is on the move in uncertain times.

Can somebody other than Desmond give me a, "That's right. Amen."? As long as I've got Desmond and the Holy Spirit, this is going to be a good service. Alright? But I need you all to join in too. My brother is carrying too much.

Here's what I want you to know. Right now, I have never seen two things simultaneously happening at the exact same time. I have never seen more confusion, more deception, more darkness, more fear, anxiety, rage, and rejection of the truth of God.

And I've also never seen more people waking up, more people with blinders dropping off, more people open to the name of Jesus, more people receptive to the movement of God than what I'm seeing right now. That tells me that is a recipe for revival.

A couple of weeks ago I shared with you this graph behind me. These are the names, dates, and times of every Great Awakening that we've experienced since 1730. And I shared with you that I'm not being a prophet, I'm not speculating that this is the case, but we do need to anticipate that it might be the case.

The only observation that I'm making is it's always 50 years between the Great Awakenings going back to 1730. And if God operates now the way that He has always operated since 1730, when it comes to awakenings and revivals, we're due for one in 2025—right around the corner.

I don't know if it's going to happen, but, man, I'm on my knees praying that it will happen. And I'm seeing, actually, all of the things beginning to kind of come into play, beginning

with this generosity initiative. The seeds of it began two years ago. We've got to wake up, God wants to move. Now is the time.

It's hard to believe that it's been a year ago that we did this very thing called Commitment Sunday. The goal of this has been 100 percent engagement and engagement are not a one-time thing. You don't just engage one time and say, "Call it a day." You keep engaging over and over again. Why? Because God still has more and more to do in you and me, through you and me.

Our goal really has nothing to do with dollar amounts. Dollar amounts—I mean, obviously, vision requires resources. That's a no-brainer. That's why we talk about dollars, and because of the stewardship that is connected to them and the work that God wants to do in your heart. But the dollar amounts are just a by-product of obedience, courage, faith, and engagement.

Man, I just want you to know this really clearly. You all have responded incredibly well to Awaken. In fact, there are churches all over the nation that call us all of the time and say, "Hey, man. Could you provide a roadmap for how you led your people through that?"

You guys are a model and an inspiration for churches all around the nation. I just have to say this because, we're going to do a commitment thing here in just a minute and I know that there may be some of you who are kind of naturally cynical. You are my people, because there is a cynic in me.

I just want you to know the reason why we are doing this is not because we're not meeting our goals. Don't tell anybody that I told you this. (Every service has had the same reaction, "Aaron, you're on the platform telling all of us, and it's online." Yeah, I know. That's called a joke.)

Don't tell anybody that I told you this, but the reason why we're doing this... We're actually surpassing all of our goals. You guys have exceeded all of them.

The reason why we are doing this is because engagement is not a one-time thing and we want to come back to God and say, "God, is there something more that You want to do?" And, there are a whole bunch of you who weren't here a year ago but are looking for an on-ramp to get involved.

So, here's what engagement looks like. "God, what do I need to be awakened from?" That is a question that I want you to write down and spend a little bit of time thinking about. When we did this a little over a year ago, I don't know how many people came up to me...

We did a whole bunch of smaller gatherings before we did this series publicly, and I had so many people come up to me saying, "You know what, man? That crisis of 2020 lulled me to sleep spiritually."



And, emotionally speaking. I was just going through the motions, going on autopilot. It was like, 'God, where are You?' And God was like, 'I'm speaking, but you've got to have the courage and the faith to follow after me. So, I needed to be awakened.'

So maybe right now you've gotten lured to sleep, "Tough year, man." Some of you have been distracted, tuned out, caught up, or weighed down.

I've taught you to pray this prayer before. It's a prayer that I prayed for the very first time as a college student, and then I didn't have the nerve to pray it again for a really long time, because of what God led me through.

I've prayed it a handful of times during my adult life. Here's the prayer, "God, the answer is yes. Now, what's the question?" Can I just tell you, man, if you are courageous enough to pray that prayer, buckle up. Buckle up, man. Because you're going to go through some stuff that is going to create some wisdom. But it's not going to be easy.

God is just looking for a few faithful, courageous men and women to say, "God, the answer is yes. Now, what's the question? We're willing to follow You anywhere. Now, that You have my attention, would You please do a refining work in me so that You can do a work through me in my time in history."

Let me just say this. If this is your first time at Traders Point, we are so glad that you are here. You picked an incredible day to come because you're going to actually get a front-row seat to see the heartbeat and the vision and the mission behind our church and kind of decide if you want to come back and be a part of this battleship.

But, I want to say this so clearly. What we're getting ready to do is something that you're welcome to jump in to and participate in if you want, but there is no obligation and no pressure. I just needed to say that to you because we don't want anything from you, we want something for you.

And today is a stake in the ground kind of a moment. Now, what I want you to do, everyone across all of our campuses, is for you to just grab this commitment card that is on your chair. Maybe you brought one with you ready to go. Those of you online, there is a QR code that you can scan and participate in this as well. And what I want to do is...

I just want you to know that this is not a financial tool, or a pledge card, this is spiritual formation tool. I want you to treat it as such. And there is power in just holding it, grabbing ahold of it, and what God is going to do in and through you through this.

I just want to pray that God would be honored by what we're going to do here in the next few moments together. So, would you grab the card" Hold onto it, and just let me pray over you.



Father, we thank You so much that You are a good God. We thank You that You are a secure, sovereign God in pandemics and outside of pandemics, in crisis and outside of crisis, in difficulty and trials and when things are going really well.

Father, right now we acknowledge that maybe we've been lulled to sleep by any number of things, and we want to be attentive to Your voice. We want to see clearly. We don't want to be deceived. We want to follow the Holy Spirit, not unholy spirits.

So, God, would You please awaken us? Now is the time. We know that You have ordained these days. Nothing surprises You. And right now, You are looking for Your church to lead the way, to be the salt and the light in a world that desperately needs to know who You are. We ask this in Jesus' name. And everybody says: Amen.

Well, we're in Philippians 4. I hope I've given you enough time to turn there. If not, I don't know what that says about you. Alright? So, Philippians, chapter 4. The first thing that I want you to see in this final chapter of Philippians, which is an incredible chapter, by the way, is how Paul is encouraging the church at Philippi.

Now, Paul started all of these churches and he's pastoring all of these churches, kind of at a distance. He pastored them through letters. So, these letters turned into most of our New Testament, they are called Epistles.

Paul is kind of pastoring all of these churches and the church in Philippi was quite possibly one of his favorite churches, and it was considered to be the most generous church—Paul refers to them multiple times as the most generous, the most sacrificial.

You would think, or connect the dots, that maybe the reason why they were so generous was because life had gone pretty well for them. Maybe they were doing pretty well, the economy was good, maybe they just got access to a trust fund.

But that's just not the case. The Philippians were in a season of real need. The Philippians were in a season where the furnace had gone out, all three kids were in college, and inflation was at an all-time high. And that's when they were the most generous.

The Philippians were in that time period where, I don't know, hypothetically speaking let's just say the week before mid-point Commitment Sunday you got a water leak in the upstairs bathroom, leaking all over the drywall, the ceiling in your kitchen, so you've got to tear out the drywall, see if there is any mold, have a mitigation company come out and dry all of that out and have a plumber come out and fix the leak.

And you haven't gotten the bill yet, and you've got to make a commitment to Commitment Sunday. That got really specific, didn't it? That's my week. Alright? That's what we're going through.



This is what the Philippians were going through and yet, they were an example to everyone else of sacrificial generosity in a set of circumstances where it did not make sense for them to be so. The math didn't math, so to speak.

And it's a good reminder for us of a couple of things. Number one: God does not need your treasure. He wants your heart. It's just that your heart is connected to your treasure via that invisible fishing line wire that connects the two.

It's why Jesus would say, "Wherever your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Wherever you send your treasure, there your heart follows not far behind. God does not need your cash. He wants your heart. The problem is that your cash has your heart. And so, He says, "Would you trust me with that?"

Number two: Generosity is a decision. It is not a reaction. In other words, I decide, I premeditate what I'm going to be generous with before my circumstances talk me out of it. I'm not going to pay all of the bills and do all the things and then be generous with what is leftover. I'm going to give God my first and my best. And by doing that I'm inviting Him into that world.

So, then Paul says this to the Philippians beginning in verses 4 and 5:

"Always." Circle that word always, "be full of joy," he didn't say happy, "Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again—rejoice! Let everyone see that you are considerate in all you do. Remember, the Lord is coming soon."

So, he says, "I want you, on all occasions, to be joyful, not happy. Happiness is different than joy. Happiness is dependent upon our circumstances and circumstances are outside of our control. You and I control very little. We don't control our employer, we don't control the economy, we don't control the stock market, we don't control what is going on inside of our bodies, we cannot control the decisions of other people.

There is so much out of our control. Therefore, if your joy and contentment is dependent upon what things are happening to you, you will be all over the place. The other word for that is unstable. It's unstable. You're constantly being blown around by the circumstances of this world. And that is no way to live.

Joy is something so much more durable. Joy is durable because it's not dependent upon circumstances. It's your perspective in spite of circumstances. And he says, "I want you to always be full of joy."

Now, please understand. We're not talking about naïve optimism. That's not only annoying, that's disingenuous. Like, in the words of that great theological song from the Lego movie, "Everything is awesome." That's not what we're talking about, because not everything is always awesome. But you still can rejoice in the face of painful circumstances.



Notice his last sentence. He says, "I want you to remember that the Lord is coming soon." That's another way of saying that our time on this planet is a blip in comparison to eternity.

It's kind of like, if I were to tie a rope from this podium to the back of the room, and I know that not all of you are physically in the room with me right now so just imagine whatever room you are in. Tie a rope to this all the way to the back of the room, that line represents all of eternity, and your 80 to 90 years on this planet would just be represented by a little yellow ribbon hanging from the rope. That's it.

Most of us have a tendency to focus everything on what happens in these 80 to 90 years, if you even get that, and we don't spend nearly enough time thinking about the timeline of eternity.

I don't know how many of you have infants or toddlers at home. But, man, if you do, we're praying for you. Alright? Just hold on. Just hold on. And for any of you who have had infants or toddlers at home and now you're past that season, what's the phrase? Whenever you've got little kids at home, what's the phrase? The days are long, the years are short.

In the midst of a long day, filled with poppy diapers and runny noses and screams and cries and Cheerios and minivan purgatory, there is going to come a day when those kids are pulling out of the driveway going to college and you'll be like, "Where did the time go?"

Did your phone ever play this trick on you? You're in a meeting. You're having a good day. You're driving through Starbucks, and all of a sudden, ding, "Here's a memory from 12 years ago." And all of a sudden you're balling, "Oh my gosh, where did the time go?"

That's what he's talking about. There is going to come a time in eternity when you and I are on the streets of gold. We're talking, "Hey, hey. Remember back in 2024?" And you are like, "Barely."

"Hey, remember that time on earth 80 to 90 years ago?" It's a blip. He's just like putting this thing in perspective. We spend so much time worrying and being anxious about stuff, but in the timeline of eternity it's not going to matter.

He says, "Man, I want to give you some perspective. I don't want you to face eternity realizing just how real that is, and how much time on earth we spent giving little thought toward sending an investment there." or what the Bible calls: being rich toward heaven, reward in eternity.

And that is not health and wealth or a prosperity gospel kind of thing, that's just good Bible teaching. And then he says in verse 6:

“Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God’s peace...”

You may not be able to explain it, but you’ll experience it. The he says:

“which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.” (NLT)

Don’t worry about anything. Pray about everything. What he’s essentially saying there is that prayer is really just inverted worry. What is worry? Prayer terminating on yourself, never getting to the ears of God. It’s just you talking to yourself about your problems with no solution. It’s just spinning and spinning and spinning.

That’s why every now and then people will come up to me and be like, “Man, I’m just really looking for my prayer life to kind of be reinvigorated. Where do I begin?” I don’t know, write down your list of worries and turn them into prayer—vibrant prayer life from day one.

You take all your worries... “Well, what do I say?” You just talk to God the way that you would talk to your best friend. You just talk to God, and you say, “God, this is what I need.”

“Oh, man. I don’t want to be a wet blanket. I don’t want to be needy.” No, God asks you to tell Him what you need. He’s your heavenly Dad.

And then, I don’t know about you guys, I miserably fail in this. I pray and pray and pray and I only remember the prayers that it didn’t seem like God answered, I conveniently forget the ones that He has. And I just never circle back.

I love that. That is like a holy cattle call right there. It’s like, “Mmmmm.” Did you just call us a bunch of cows? Maybe I did. Maybe I did.

We never circle back to say, “Thank you.” I think Jesus taught a parable about that one time.

So, just write out a list of the things that you are concerned about and just keep track of that and circle back. Tell God what you need. Thank Him for all that He has done and then here’s a promise, “You will experience the peace of God that you will know but you cannot explain.”

That peace that is unexplainable, undestroyable, and undeniable. And he says, “It’s going to guard your heart.” Why? Because your heart needs to be guarded: your motivations, your fears, your anxieties they don’t guard your mind. Your mind needs to be guarded: your thoughts, your perspectives, your false narratives, that’s how Satan gets in, through your thoughts. Guard them. And then in verse 8 he goes:

“And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts,”

What an interesting way to say that. Fix them, be focused on them, be unresolved in them. Well, what do you fix your thoughts on?

“...what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. Keep putting into practice all you learned and received from me—everything you heard from me and saw me doing.” That’s discipleship, by the way, “Then the God of peace will be with you.” Philippians 5:8-9 (NLT)

Notice how many times he mentions mind and thoughts.

It reminds me of something that Paul would encourage young Timothy with in 2 Timothy, chapter 4, verse 5. He would say to Timothy, “Keep your head in all situations.”

One of Paul’s favorite phrases that he would use in that whole stretch of Scripture is, “Be sober minded.” Sober mindedness. What a great couple of words to put together. Because when you think of the word sober what immediately comes to your mind? Drunk. When you think about drunk, what do you think you get drunk with? You get drunk with drink.

So, be sober; meaning don’t take in too much alcohol to get drunk. Here he says, “Be sober minded.” “Well, what are you talking about, Paul? What do you get drunk on?” Thoughts that are untrue. False narratives. Gossip. Slander. Fear. Anxiety. Not only can you get drunk on your false thoughts, you can get drunk on other people’s false thoughts.

You ever catch other people’s emotions? You’re just having a fine day. You’re trying to be empathetic. You’re trying to be a friend. All of a sudden they are like, “Blaaaa.” And instead of you being sober minded, you get drunk on their emotions. And now you’re doing the same thing. Paul says, “Be sober minded. Live wise.”

Jesus would say this in Matthew, chapter 11... Here’s why you’ve got to be sober minded. Here’s why you’ve got to fix your thoughts as representatives of the kingdom of God, Matthew, chapter 11, “The kingdom of God is forcefully advancing. It’s marching forward.”

It’s not casually advancing. It’s not sideways advancing. It’s not randomly advancing. It’s not hopefully advancing. It is forcefully advancing, which means that it is intentional, which requires the sober mindedness of God’s people.

So, when God presents us with an opportunity to advance His kingdom, which is what Awaken is about, then it is easy to look at all of the reasons why it can’t be done, all the resistance against what could be done, all of the challenges that keep it from being done, “Oh, man. It’s too hard. I don’t have enough time.”

Here's the biggest lie that I hear so often from God's people. "Oh, man. I'm just not qualified. I'm not good enough."

Satan is a deceiver. He's also an accuser. Satan will accuse you of things. You ever heard this whisper in your head? "Oh, man. Who do you think you are? Who do you think you are serving? Who do you think you are singing on that team? Who do you think you are?"

"If people knew what was really going on inside you, they would kick you out of there so fast. You're such a poser." He's accusing and he's deceiving you. And you are like, "Who am I? Who am I that I could ever be used? I'm going to sit this one out."

Or maybe you've been hurt so you limp over to the bench, spiritually speaking, and you're just kind of sitting there on the bench and you are afraid to get back in, you're afraid to give to God what it is that He has entrusted you with to steward for all of eternity.

And Jesus is looking for you to just offer Him what you have, not what you don't have. Jesus is looking for your availability. And so often we look at ability.

And He just says, "Man, what have I put in your hands? Your time, your treasure, your talent. Man, I've given that to you to take care of you because you're My son or My daughter. I've given that to you to enjoy. It's not a bad thing to enjoy what I've given to you. And I've given it to you for you to steward wisely."

"Why are you clinging onto that stuff? Because when you're clinging onto that, I can't put anything more in your hands." It's only when you do this [open your hands], "Jesus just I'm coming to You with what I've got."

One of my favorite stories is the feeding of the 5,000, actually, that's a misrepresentation, it's probably more like the feeding of the 15 or 20,000 because they just counted the men there that day. You know there would have been women and children, so 15 to 20,000 hungry people who are hangry. They were hangry. They're angry, they are mean, they are complaining, "All day long teaching. We've got to have some food."

The disciples catch their emotions. They are no longer sober minded. Remember the story? The disciples were like, "Jesus, we're freaking out here, man. All of these people are so hungry. We can't possibly go to Costco now."

Here was their solution, "Send them home. We're not going to advance the kingdom. We're not going to minister to people's needs. Just tell them to go home and fend for themselves."



I would have loved to have seen the look on Jesus' face. "You guys." Then, all of a sudden, there is this little boy who walks up, and he's got a Lunchables—five loaves, two fishes, "Jesus, can You do something with that?"

I'm sure the disciples were just like, "Pfft." And Jesus is like "Yes I can. Watch me flex." And He feeds 15,000 people with a boy's Lunchables because it's not about the amount, it's offering to God what you have. And a whole bunch of people went home with doggie bags that day.

Some of you are so worried about that area of your life. This is consistently the number one area, statistically, that people say is the thing that stresses them out the most. It's money. It's one of the top reasons why people get divorced, over disagreements with money.

God does not want your money. He wants your heart. The way that He gets your heart is when you give Him access to your treasure. And when you do that, you invite Him in to bless all of it.

That's been my favorite thing about Awaken. There is obviously a goal over here. And even if there weren't goals and vision and we say we want to move at the speed of your generosity, there are so many exciting things that we're trying to accomplish—take all of that off of the table. I would do this again and again and again for all of the stories that have rolled in of discipleship.

People have grabbed me at the mall, they've DM'd me, they've texted me, "Pastor Aaron, we've just got to share our story with you. We gave God our Lunchables, and it was like this act of faith that produces character that we were so scared of doing."

And they go, "We didn't have a job. There were all of these financial pressures. And, man, we didn't see how in the world God was going to pave the way forward. And He did. He came through in unbelievable, supernatural ways." It's accelerated many of you in discipleship. And you know what I'm talking about.

There is a lot of resistance to get there because, because there may be people or Christians, or pastors, or churches that have abused this teaching—prosperity gospel, health and wealth—that have given us a reason to push back from it. Man, Satan is having a hay day with that because this is one of the primary things that God wants to use to shape your heart.

I think about my friend Eric and his wife Haley. A year ago, we did Awaken. They were newlyweds. They just bought a house. They were not making a lot of money. And Eric was actually unemployed at the time. He was in a three-month job search drought. I don't know if any of you have ever been in that season, but it is painful.

We started Awaken. And Haley, his wife, was an art teacher at a school.



I gave an illustration one Sunday in Awaken about Indiana Jones, one of the original movies where Indiana Jones has to walk across that canyon. Do you know what I'm talking about? And he can't see the bridge. The only way to see it is to step out. It's a great clip—not the sermon, but the clip. So, Indiana Jones steps out and the ground was solid under his feet. Psalm 119, "Your word is a light unto my path."

And Eric said, that just hit him right between the eyes. So, they got into their car. They were driving home. He says to Haley, "Hey, I really feel like God is calling us to make a commitment even though I don't have a job." And Haley's response was, "I'm all in." He married well as most of us did. So, they made a commitment.

Literally, he said that the very next day a company that he'd applied for a job with a month earlier—he'd honestly forgotten about it because it had been so long—called him and not only offered him a job, but they offered him a higher position than what he applied for with more pay enabling his wife, Haley, to actually quit her job (she's an artist) so she could start something called Lost and Found Apparel.

Check it out on Instagram. Everyone show them some support and love because it's faith inspired art, and they give 10 percent of what they make back.

Guys, I'm telling you those stories have continued to roll in all throughout the year.

Now, listen. I know when I say that, once again, I don't know where all of my skeptics are right now, you're probably being very quiet sitting in the back, you are my people. Alright?

I don't know if that is how God is going to work in your life. Please don't hear me say, "Oh, man. I'm unemployed so I need to make a commitment and then God will give me a job." No, wrong application.

I don't know how God is going to show up in your life. I do know this. God's work in your life is tailor made for what you need. God understands the circumstances in your life. God understands the resistance against you. God is looking for you to come to Him empty handed and say, "God, the answer is yes. Now, what's the question?"

Financial obedience and stewardship are not the only way to do this, but it's a big one because finances are tied to our sense of security. You may not want to admit it, but it's God's chief competition on the throne of your heart. And God doesn't want to be in competition. He wants to be Lord over it.

Verse 10, I'm actually preaching longer this hour. I don't know why. You guys are just so much fun. So, verse 10:

"How I praise the Lord that you are concerned about me again. I know you have always been concerned for me, but you didn't have the chance to help me. Not that I was ever in need, for I have learned how to be content..."



Notice he says learned, it's not something you just get. You've got to learn.

"with whatever I have. I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. For I can do everything through Christ who gives me strength." (NLT)

That's what every power lifter has tattooed on his back. And I hate to break this to you, if you've got that tattooed and that's why you got it, that is actually taken out of context. That verse is not about dead lifting 350 pounds, throwing the game winning touchdown, hitting the last shot, "I can do all through Christ who give me strength." That's awesome. Not the correct application. I just broke a lot of hearts saying that. I know. I know.

The primary application is contentment. I can do all things. I can survive all things. I can let God have access to all of my time, treasure, and talent because He is the One who gives me strength.

Now, let me finish the passage. Verse 14:

"Even so, you have done well to share with me in my present difficulty. As you know, you Philippians were the only ones who gave me financial help when I first brought you the Good News and then traveled on from Macedonia. No other church did this.

"Even when I was in Thessalonica you sent help more than once." Because engagement is not a one-time thing, it's a continual process. "I don't say this because I want a gift from you. Rather, I want you to receive a reward," eternity, "for your kindness.

"At the moment I have all I need—and more! I am generously supplied with the gifts you sent me with Epaphroditus. They are a sweet-smelling sacrifice that is acceptable and pleasing to God. And this same God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus.

"Now all glory to God our Father forever and ever! Amen. Philippians, 5:14-20 (NLT)

I want to home in on verse 17 as we wrap up. Paul is commending and appreciating these early believers for being so generous and partnering with him in the gospel—that they continue to do it multiple times regardless of their circumstances.

He reminds them, "Hey, guys. I don't want anything from you. I want something for you." And that might be one of the most counter-intuitive truths to truly embrace once you become a follower of Jesus.

Typically, the very last thing... What we might call the lagging indicator of somebody's discipleship journey is how you trust God with your treasure. That's usually the last thing to get baptized, if you will. We go under but we keep our checkbooks above. It's usually the last thing.



I just want to encourage you. You want to go on a journey with God? Are you tired of buckling under the pressure of financial strain? Then invite Him to be more over that area of your life.

I want you to know that I'm a fellow struggler with you. I've shared this story before. I don't have time to go into all of it here. This is one of the areas that God has continued to work in in my life because of some things that happened in my childhood, but also just how I'm kind of naturally wired as a provider and achiever. I take on way too much and I feel like it's up to me to provide for my family.

I'm a worst-case scenario of constantly thinking this through. Thankfully, I married a saint. I married way above my head. She doesn't have that issue. And she's constantly reminding me God always provides. God always takes care of us.

So, if you're here and, man, you're in that battle, that struggle, I'm with you in this and I've had to continue to bring this to God over and over and over again. But I'm telling you, I'm telling you that when you do it's like defibrillator of power to your faith.

So, what I want to ask you to do... I'm looking forward to some more stories like Eric and Hayley's coming out of this. Here's what I want to ask you to do. Everybody pull out this commitment card. Once again, if this is your first time, you just get a chance to look and see what is happening. These are for people who are saying, "This is my church. I'm on the battleship manning my station." This is for you.

I want you to pull out this card. Here are a couple of things. Number one: I want you to know that there are some of you who are new to Traders Point. God has moved in your life through our church, but you weren't here a year ago to participate in this. This is your on-ramp to make a one-year commitment to finish out Awaken and to finish it strong for what God desires to do.

Others of you, maybe you were here. You made an Awaken commitment and if you were to be really honest you're like, "Man, Pastor Aaron, that story about Eric and Hayley, that was awesome, but that's not our story. I'm still unemployed. I'm still going through some rough times. I've had some unexpected expenses."

Man, I just want you to know that as your pastor I want to see that, hear that, come alongside... We don't want anything from you. We want something for you. It must be that God is trying to develop some sincere sober mindedness and wisdom in you. And we want to come around you. And maybe your prayer is, "God, would you just help me to finish my commitment strong."

Maybe there is a third group of you who are like, "You know what? We made a really generous commitment to Awaken a year ago and it was a really generous number. But if you were to be really, really honest, God's been really good, and it no longer requires faith to do what you committed to a year ago. Auto draft has become auto pilot. You

don't really miss it anymore. And maybe now it's not about numbers, it's about you coming to God continually with your first and your best and saying, "God, I'm ready to go on another journey of faith with You this morning."

Generosity and engagement are not a one-time event. It's a decision we continue to keep in front of us. I want you to think about this as a spiritual formation tool. And I want you to know that we're with you in this.

A couple of things I want you to know. Number one: What we're doing here today, it matters. Shoulders of Saints is all about the people who came before us, whose shoulders we're standing on: their faith, their generosity, their courage. Now is our time. And we are going to be the shoulders generations are going to be standing along with because of what we're doing right now in this moment.

Some of you, you're going to be committing for the very first time, others of you, you're going to be choosing to make a commitment in ways that you've never done before and I'm so excited for you.

What I want you to do... This is your audience it's an audience of one. It's not me. It's not anybody else around you. It's an audience of one. I don't know if you came with a spouse or if you're by yourself today, but I want you to take a little bit of time to talk about it, think about it, pray about it.

And then take a moment to write down the number that is not a safe choice, but a courageous one where you are inviting God in. There is power in writing it down. I just want you to spend a little bit of time devoting this to the Lord. I want you to treat this like communion and just commune with God over this. There is a real spiritual element to it. I don't want you to miss it.

So, take a few moments. Do that together. And then stay seated. I'll come back up here in a minute to tell us what we're going to do next.

Pause

Guys, it is the honor and joy of our life to be able to serve in this moment, in this time of history with all of you. There isn't any group of people I'd want to do it with other than you guys.

So, right now what I want to ask is... I just want to pray a prayer of blessing over us, that this would be a pivotal moment that we all look back on in our own discipleship journey and in the life of our church to see God move in profound ways.

Let me pray right now.

Father, we come to You. We're so grateful that You are a good, good God and that You are sovereign and in control even when things seem unstable and out of control. And we know, right now, that Your kingdom is forcefully advancing and that You just want us to



be available to offer You what we have: time, treasure, talent. That You would take that and multiply it out.

So, Father, I pray that You would bring revival. I pray that you would stir an awakening. I pray for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon us as individuals, upon us as a church, our communities, our city, around the nation, and even around the world because people so desperately need to hear.

God, we don't want to, in eternity, look back at this moment and realize that we slept through it. We want to be awakened to the movement of Your Spirit. We ask this in Jesus' name. And everybody said: Amen.

Hey, if you would stand to your feet. Don't leave. We're going to worship together. Would you take your card after you've thoughtfully committed and prayed over it and come to one of these boxes around the room, drop it off, whenever you are ready and be engaged as we worship together for one more song. So, would you come?

