

# MESSAGE TRANSCRIPT //

BY ANY MEANS | SHOULDERS OF SAINTS

AARON BROCKETT | NOVEMBER 17, 2024

Well, it's good to be with you today. We are about halfway through this message series called Shoulders of Saints.

And if you are new or just now joining us the big idea behind this series is that every single one of us are products of somebody else's belief or work in us. Maybe it was a teacher or a coach or your first boss—somebody who spoke words of blessing and encouragement into you and called some things out in you that maybe you didn't see on your own who opened up some doors of opportunity that you never could have accessed on your own. It kind of made you who you are today.

I've been thinking a lot about that. And the names of some men and women who would be on my list of saints on whose shoulders I'm standing. One name that comes to mind, in particular, is a lady by the name of Mrs. Stark. She was my college English Comp professor.

What you have to know about Mrs. Stark is that she was one of the most popular profs on campus. She was articulate. She was a really good author—published in a lot of journals. She was somewhat flamboyant. She would speak her mind a lot. Sometimes that would get her into trouble, which I think is part of the reason why, as students, we really loved her.

And, honestly, I was a little bit intimidated by her because of her popularity on campus. I remember the first class I took of hers, the first assignment in that class was that I had to write a short story on any topic I wanted to choose.

So, I wrote a short story on ordering a sandwich from Subway. I was pretty proud of that. And I turned it in. I'll never forget, she gave me a 100 percent on it. She actually read it to the class and said, "This is an example of a really great short story."

And then she made a little note in red on my assignment and as she handed it back to me she said, "Aaron, this is exceptionally well done. I have high hopes for you." I was like floating all of the way back to my dorm. I was like, "Mrs. Stark has high hopes for me."

Which is why I was a little bit devastated later in the semester when I did an assignment, and I ripped it so badly that she flunked me. And it wasn't like a respectable flunk, if there is such a thing. It was like a dumpster fire kind of a grade. We're talking, I don't know a 30 percent out of 100 kind of a thing. And it really confused me because I tried really hard on the assignment.



I remember going in that afternoon to talk to her. And I pled my case. I said, "You know, Mrs. Stark, this grade reflects a grade of a student who doesn't care. And I really care."

That was enough for her to stop and reconsider. And I said, "Tell me what I did wrong." She said, "Give me some time to think about it." The next day I went in to talk to her and she said, "Hey, I'm going to give you an opportunity to redo this assignment."

And she said, "If I'm going to error," I'll never forget this, she said, "I want error on the side of grace." That was a defining moment for me. Not only the first grade that I got, the 100 percent, but that moment. I've never forgotten it.

The reason I'm telling you all of that is because last Sunday after church, when I got home, I got a text message from her, just out of the blue. I don't know how many of you get text messages from your former college profs—not an everyday experience here.

So, I opened up my phone and this is what it said, "Dear Aaron, I'm in Indy visiting a friend and we were watching today's service online." I was like, "Oh, no." And then she said, "Once again, I'm struck by what a great communicator you are. Your message was so timely and necessary, it touched me very much. I'm so grateful for you. Sending you much love. Mrs. Stark." Man, I was floating through the house. I was like, "Mrs. Stark loved my sermon!"

Now, the reason why I'm telling you that is because she's one of many on whose shoulders I'm standing. All of these years later... I don't know if she watches every week or if last week was a fluke. Mrs. Stark, if you're watching please know I so appreciated that because all of these years later, her investment into me means that I'm doing what I'm doing. I am who I am because of her belief in me, because she spoke words of blessing into me. And is still continuing to do so.

Here's what I want to ask you today. What about you? Who would be on your list? Now, if you don't have a list of names of people on whose shoulders you're standing, I'd encourage you later this afternoon, maybe some time this week, just to sit down and on a piece of paper or some sort of word document and just to begin to make a list of names.

Here's why I think it is important to do so. I think that all of us are operating off a couple of lists. And most of the time we're operating off of that list of names of people who have hurt us, which is understandable. That's real. Pain is real.

Now, here's what I would say. If you were actually to take out two pieces of paper and write down a list of names of the people who've hurt you, chances are it would be a much shorter list than what you might imagine. It's just that the hurts have a tendency to run a bit deeper.

But how often do we stop to make a list of names of the people who have made investments in us? I would even go as far as to say that the difference between

bitterness and joy is which list you fixate on. We're all going to have a list of people who have hurt us, but we've got to look at the list of the people who have spoken words of blessing and encouragement into us and to recognize how God has used those voices to shape us in profound ways.

We've got to take it one step further. Determine that you're going to be on as many people's blessing list as you possibly can. Recognize that all of us are in need of encouragement. We live in an age of cancel culture and fear and chronic anxiety. And we need to speak words of life into the lives of as many people as possible.

That's a big part of what Shoulders of Saints is about. And it's also the mid-point of our Awaken generosity initiative as a church. If you're brand-new to our church or if you are just now joining us you can go to the link behind me [vision.tpcc.org](http://vision.tpcc.org) and you can check out all of the details around the vision. There is a vision video that you can watch.

Last week I shared some information at a 60-thousand-foot level, just some vision, where we feel like God is leading us together as a church. Next Sunday is going to be our mid-point commitment Sunday.

And I just want to encourage you, those of you who have had one of these cards and you've done some prayer over this. I just want to ask you to continue to wrestle with this card and ask yourself the question, "God, what does gospel centered, bold generosity look like for us in this season?" And next week we're going to come together, it's going to be kind of a galvanizing moment for us as a church.

Now, if you did this a year ago, this is for all of us to sort of re-up. If you are brand-new to our church, it's going to be an onramp for you to jump on to to be a part of what God is doing around here through the Awaken initiative.

And for many of you, you're going to kind of be like us. We're kind of processing through this. We made a big commitment of faith a year ago, but we're asking God, "Do You want us to take another step of faith?" All of that is next weekend. I want to encourage you not to miss it as we wrap this series up.

Where we've been in this is we've just been looking at Paul's letter to the Philippian church. And where we are is in Philippians, chapter 3. So, if you have a Bible go ahead and find that.

What Paul is doing with the Philippians is that he is encouraging them to be of one mind. He uses that phrase multiple times in the letter. It's actually a big theme through all of Paul's writings in the New Testament, encouraging them to be of one mind as it relates to the work that God is doing in each one of us as individuals and then from that what is the work that God desires to do through us collectively as a church.

And in the first few verses of chapter 3, Paul is cautioning them against something that is so easy to do. He's cautioning them to not add anything to the finished work that Jesus has done on our behalf. Look at what he writes starting in verse 3. He says:

"We rely on what Christ Jesus has done for us."

Two things I'd point out. That word rely is this idea of whatever it is that I'm resting my weight upon. Is it durable enough to carry it? And then notice that he writes what Jesus has done for us in the past tense. It's not what I am currently bringing to the table or what I am doing, it's what Jesus has done for me. And then he says:

"We put no confidence in human effort, though I could have confidence in my own effort if anyone could. Indeed, if others have reason for confidence in their own efforts, I have even more!" Philippians 3:3-4 (NLT)

What is Paul saying there in verse 4? Actually, what Paul is doing there is he is talking a little bit of trash. He's saying, "Hey, man. If anybody could have a reason to say that human effort could justify them in the eyes of others or God, it would be me."

And then he goes on to explain what he means by that in verses 5 and 6. He says:

"I was circumcised when I was eight days old. I am a pure-blooded citizen of Israel and a member of the tribe of Benjamin—a real Hebrew if there ever was one! I was a member of the Pharisees, who demand the strictest obedience to the Jewish law. I was so zealous that I harshly persecuted the church. And as for righteousness, I obeyed the law without fault." Philippians 3:5-6 (NLT)

This is Paul showing us his resume. This is Paul saying, "Hey, listen. I was born into the right family. I was born as a Hebrew. I was part of God's chosen people as a Jew. If anybody had a right to brag, if anybody could point to their list of accomplishments and say, 'This is enough to justify themselves,' it would be me."

Then he's going to show us the faultiness of this in verse 7. He says:

"I once thought these things were valuable, but now I consider them worthless," Why?  
"because of what Christ has done."

Verse 8:

"Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded..."

This is the idea of I have thrown off, I've released that extra weight I was carrying:

"I've discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage,"

That's the word, hold on to it, I'm going to circle back to that word in a minute.

“so that I could gain Christ and become one with him. I no longer count on my own righteousness through obeying the law; rather, I become righteous through faith in Christ. For God’s way of making us right with himself depends on faith.” Philippians 3:7-9 (NLT)

Man, if you want to know what the core of the gospel message is, Paul captures it there in verses 8 and 9 in a concise and precise way. It is not as if I bring something to the table and then Jesus brings the rest. It’s that Jesus brings it all. Jesus would say it this way, “All of my righteous acts are like filthy rags in the eyes of a holy God.”

It’s not my righteousness plus some of Jesus’ sacrifice. I become righteous through faith in what Christ has done. God’s way of making me right is when I entrust myself, by faith, to what Jesus has done so that when God looks at me He sees the fulfilled righteousness of Jesus and when He looks at Jesus He sees the sin that He took upon Himself on our behalf reconciling it once and for all on a cross.

Paul said, “All of these things that I thought valuable, all of these accomplishments, all of these behaviors, all of these accolades, all of these things that I thought were once valuable, I’ve discarded them.” In other words, he says, “Those are the things that I used to put my hope in. Those are the things I found my sense of security in. Those are the things that I looked to to give me a sense of identity and purpose. Now, I consider them worthless.”

Now, for you and me today, I would just encourage us to make a list at some point and just ask ourselves, “Okay, what am I looking to find my sense of identity in? In who or in what do I look to to tell myself, ‘I’m going to be okay.’? What are the accomplishments that I’m pointing to that actually help me rest at night, to go, ‘You know what? I’m a good person. I’m going to be okay.’?”

Now, nine times out of 10, what we do is we take really, really good things, that in and of themselves are not bad at all, but we make them... We actually rest too much of our weight on them. We turn them into god things, a good thing becomes a god thing and it’s not durable enough to give us a sense of identity and hope and purpose.

So, for some of us it would be our accomplishments. For some of us it would be our grades or our reputation or our career or our bank account. And none of those things are bad in and of themselves unless we begin to look to those things to give us peace, unless we begin to look at those things to help us justify ourselves or to give us a sense of worth and value.

At some point they are going to falter, which explains why, for many of us, myself included, we know that this has been wrongly ordered when we get criticized—I’m not talking about constructive criticism or helpful feedback, I’m talking about criticism and when we get criticized we fall apart.

That's actually a good indication that your identity has gotten wrapped up too much in what other people think or say about you, which is why it is always a good rule of thumb to never take criticism from somebody who you would never take counsel from.

Or when your grades dip and you begin to spiral because you've sort of built your sense of self-worth on this track that you've set out for yourself, or maybe the pressure your parents have placed upon you.

You've got to make the grades to get into the right school, to get the right job, to get the right job so that way you can begin to set out on a career track that is going to help you with a comfortable life. Once again, none of those things are bad. It's just a pretty crummy way to build an identity because when it begins to go wrong all of a sudden it spins you out.

For many of us it's our bank account. Whenever your bank account drops below that... It's an arbitrary number, by the way, that we've established in our minds. It's usually the combination of the algorithm of how many days left to payday, combine that with the bills, combine that with unexpected expenses—that leaves me enough cushion to know that I'm going to be okay. And the number is always changing.

So, you open up the PNC app on your lunch break and you see that that number accidentally dropped below the arbitrary number that helps you know that you're going to be okay and all of a sudden anxiety begins to flood in. Am I just preaching to myself? Any of you relate to that?

You know what Jesus said about this in Matthew, chapter 6, you know the verse that says, "Hey, the birds in the air, they don't worry about where their next meal is going to come from. The lilies of the field, they are taken care of," you know that verse, "and you are much more infinite than the birds of the air, much more valuable than the lilies of the field," but in this instance you're not so sure that Jesus is going to come through.

Tim Keller says it this way:

The human heart is an idol factory that takes good things like a successful career, love, material possessions and even family and turns them into ultimate things. Our hearts deify them as the center of our lives because, we think, they can give us significance and security, safety and fulfillment, if we attain them.

Now, most of us when we hear that our hearts are idol factories, we have a tendency to sort of let ourselves off of the hook on that because when we think of idolatry we think of little gold statues that you bow down to and worship and you're like, "I've never done that."

But we do it all of the time whenever we take a good thing and make it a god thing, make it an ultimate thing. And idol is anything, an intangible object or a person or a relationship, that you look to to help you justify who you are. It's disordered worship.

And one of God's greatest acts of mercy and grace upon our lives, and it doesn't feel like it at the time, but it is, is when you invite the Spirit of God to search you. The Spirit of God detects anything in your life that you've begun to idolize and what He will do in an act of grace is He will shake that up in order to nudge you toward replacing the instability of that idol with the power of the one true God, which comes by faith. He wants to free you of the chains of idolatry in your life.

We actually strap all of this on. We're looking for our own accolades, accomplishments, and bank accounts to give us a sense of identity and worth and in reality we don't even know that we are enslaved by all of these things. Paul uses the word discarded, which implies these were things that were weighing him down.

And the answer to criticism is not to develop a hard heart and say, "Well, you know what? I don't care what anybody says about me. I'm just going to do me." No. That's called hard-heartedness. And that's not the answer to this.

Some people will say, "You know what? I just decided that I hate money. I don't want to have anything to do with it." And I would say, number one, good luck with that. And number two, what do you do with all of the stewardship verses in the Bible where God says that we need to be stewards of treasures that are temporarily entrusted to us? You can't steward very well if you hate them.

Some of us have been hurt by people so we create a moat around our hearts and say, "I'm not going to let anybody get close to me ever again." Well, you know what? You're only hurting yourself. Satan wants to isolate you away from relationships.

Now, I don't know who needs to hear this, but there is somebody right now and you are having a really hard time with the concept of God being your heavenly Father because you didn't have a very good example of an earthly one.

And I just want to say to you, right now, "Man, refuse to project the shortcomings of your earthly father on your heavenly Father because they are not one and the same." Let God redeem the concept of fatherhood for you.

I don't know who needs to hear that, somebody needs to hear it, if it's at least one person... Well, somebody already came up to me today and said they needed to hear it. So, honestly, this one is for free. I don't know if anybody in this service needs to hear that. But some of you may need to hear that.

And the simple fact is, right now, you're going to get criticized. The simple fact is, you're going to face financial difficulties. The simple fact is, life is really, really heavy. The question is: How are you going to navigate it? How are you going to walk through it? And, really, you've got to ask yourself, "Am I trying to carry all of these things in my own power or am I inviting God into all of these things and trusting Him with them?"



[Aaron refers to four duffle bags: one bag represents people, one bag represents health, one bag represents money, one bag represents career]

So, I've just got up here on the stage some things that all of us are carrying. Many of us have relationships, maybe it's an interpersonal thing going on. Thanksgiving is around the corner so, I'll let you deal with that.

Some of us right now maybe it's just a health-related thing for you or a family member. You've got something health related going on. It seems like I pray with somebody almost every week who has some sort of health concern going on in their life.

Others of you, this would be a huge one, money is a big one, whether you have more than enough or not enough it doesn't really matter. It's a big issue that you've got to steward and recognize in our lives.

Some of you, it would be your career.

There would be others. You could probably identify some things that you are carrying right now in life. I don't know, these are maybe some of the big ones. And it's not like we can push away from all of these things and say, "I don't want to have anything to do with them."

I mean, we're going to have to engage with people. We're going to have to go to work. We're going to have to deal with money and finances. Our health is our health. It's a matter of whether or not we are carrying it or entrusting it.

So, right now some of you, if we were to get inside your life, you've just kind of strapped some stuff up. Some of you are high achievers, high capacity. You are fine until you are not. And you're just loaded up right now, "I've got it." If you were asked, "How are you doing?" You'd be like, "I'm fine. Great. I'm good." But you're not good. Alright?

You're just trying to carry all of this stuff. You're trying to hold it. I mean, this is life. Part of being an adult is navigating all of these things, carrying this weight. And you've got to move it from point A to point B.

But, when Paul says, "Hey, I've discarded this. I've thrown all of this off." That's language for recognizing that the gospel isn't just about a belief system that you come and sing some songs on Sunday and then go back to strapping yourself up.

Some of you dropped some of this weight before you walked in here. And what you're going to do right after the service is over is you're going to pick it right back up, "Hey, God. I know You've got it, but I know You don't really have it. I've got to get it."

[Aaron begins to place each bag on a wagon representing God]

Here's what Jesus is inviting us into, what Paul is inviting us into in Philippians. Entrusting it doesn't mean that you're letting go and abdicating responsibility. It means



that you actually allow it to be placed into a position where the weight can be distributed and carried.

Jesus would say it this way, "My yoke is easy. My burden is light." What did He mean? Did He mean life is easy? No. He says, "When you come to Me and you entrust Me with some of these things, then My yoke is easy, and My burden is light."

Oh, this, by the way [the wagon] is God. So, we're actually laying all of this down. Can I just say this? This is far easier [pulling the bags in the wagon by the handle] when you entrust them to God recognizing that you find your identity and your sense of purpose in Him and Him alone. This is a far better way to live.

This is what discipleship looks like, by the way. You're taking all of this and you're just entrusting it to God. You are inviting Him into these areas. You're saying, "God, this is really heavy. I don't know that I have the capacity to know how to walk through this in life." It is a much, much freer way to live.

In this progression, Paul says in verses 7 and 8, "All of the things I used to look to, used to value, I now consider them worthless in comparison to what Christ has done." And he goes, "Everything else is worthless compared to the infinite knowledge of knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord." And then he switches it up and he says, "I've discarded everything else, and I actually consider all of my accomplishments garbage so that I could gain Christ."

And that's not a very good English translation of the word. He goes from worthless to garbage. And garbage is a really, really strong word. English has cleaned it up quite a bit.

"σκύβαλα" skubala

Actually, the Greek word is skubala. That's the word. It's a fun word to say. What in the world does that mean? Skubala is what your dog does on the sidewalk. That's what it is. It's a strong, even a vulgar term that we've softened up in the English. It literally is referring to refuse, dung, manure all of the words that we use for that.

So, Paul is basically saying, "All my accomplishments are like pooh." That's really what he is saying. Actually, he said it much stronger than that, but this is church. I can't say what he actually says. "All of my accomplishments, all of my achievements in light of what Jesus has done..." that's a freeing perspective.

There are a lot of us who call ourselves Christians and yet we continue to place ourselves under a yoke of slavery once again. And the yoke of slavery is my accomplishments, my identity, my worth. I keep trying to bring something to the table and Jesus says, "It's already been paid."

My grandparents, when they were alive part of their blessing to the family, part of sharing some of their inheritance with us, was that they took the family on a family

vacation every other year—somewhere really nice. They started that when I was in high school. We did a couple of trips when I was in grade school. But they started getting more regular when I was in high school and in the first couple of years of Lindsay and my marriage.

I remember one year they took us on a vacation, and I didn't understand how this worked. They took us to a resort that was all inclusive. Now, I've since come to know what all inclusive means but at the time I just thought that meant that we're not leaving the resort.

So, I thought how this worked is that grandma and grandpa bought the plane tickets. Grandma and grandpa bought us the tickets to get us on to the resort, then everything else was up to me.

Lindsay and I were in our first couple of years of marriage. We had little kids. We hardly had any money. I was still operating under that. Every time we would go to a restaurant or a food truck, I was keeping track because I thought that when we went to check out at the end of the week that I was going to have to pay for my own food. I don't know why I thought that. That's just what I thought. So, it affected what I ordered.

We were going into a restaurant and out of everything on the menu I was like, "Well, you know. I'll just take the grilled cheese." Somebody was like, "Why are you ordering the grilled cheese?" And I was like, "Well, we don't have a lot of money and at the end of the week we're going to have to pay the bill." And they said, "This is all inclusive." And I was like, "What does that mean?"

"It's already been paid."

I was like, "Oh, man." I was ordering tomahawk steaks for breakfast every day after that. That's a silly illustration, but that's what many of us do when it comes to Jesus. Jesus has paid it all and yet we still think, at least part of it, is my own accomplishments, beliefs, and behavior. No. He's paid it all. It's all inclusive. Jesus has redeemed you as a son or a daughter of the King.

It's not Jesus plus moralism. It's not Jesus plus finances. It's not Jesus plus hard work and achievement. It's recognizing that He has paid it all and now we're living out of the position that Jesus died for us to have.

Can I just ask you to do some personal reflection later today? Ask yourself this question, "Right now, in my life," be honest about it, "in who or in what am I looking to to find my sense of security? In who or in what am I looking to to find my sense of peace? In who or in what am I looking to to tell myself that I'm going to be okay?"

And chances are it's going to be one of those bags. Chances are it's the things that we look to to justify ourselves and to say, "I know God loves me, but I need to be a good

person to continue to re-up.” And He says, “No. I actually died for you to have this position in Christ and now you live out of that position.”

Now, money is not the only thing, but money is a big one. And perhaps it may be the most concentrated area of our lives that we need to surrender, and we need to invite God into. I think that’s the reason why Jesus taught about it so much. It’s because it’s God chief competition for the throne of our hearts.

Somebody once said that money is a terrible master but it’s an excellent servant. And the way that you keep money from becoming master over you is you entrust it to God—here’s the word proactively. Proactively. Meaning, “I’m going to give God my first and I’m going to give God my best before the bills, the expenses or Starbucks talks me out of it.

I pre-determine what I’m going to entrust to Him. And then, by doing that, I invite God in as an act of faith and that just opens up the doors for Him to bless the rest of my finances.

That’s what a big part of what Awaken has been about. God doesn’t need your money. He wants your heart. And Jesus would say, “Your heart is connected to those resources.” So, when you invite God in, He doesn’t want you to sleepwalk through life where you earn a decent living, save up a nest egg, and retire comfortably. None of those things are bad, by the way. He just wants you to live for eternity. He says, “I want you to live with the end in mind. I want you to recognize that money shapes you right where you are.”

It’s kind of like from the very first job that you got, whether that was mowing yards or babysitting or serving ice cream and you earned that paycheck and you looked at that at you were like, “Who in the world is FICA and why did they take a chunk of my pay?” And you deposit it into the bank. And then from that you either saved it, gave it, or lived off of it. And you’ve been doing that ever since.

You will receive thousands of paychecks all through your life until you retire. Here’s how I want you to think about it. You know the phrase easy come easy go? Money flows into your bank account and it flows right back out. And what it leaves behind is a shaped heart.

It’s like when you go to the creek and you’re skipping rocks, and the rocks are smooth because the water has been flowing over them. Money that flows into your life and out of your life shapes your heart. And Jesus says, “I want you to rightly order it.”

I’ve just been hearing so many stories from people over the last year where this is the area where God has awakened you in a faith journey. And if you feel like your faith has been flat lined, you just invite God into that area of your life and watch what He might do.



Now, this is not a give to get kind of a thing. This is not the prosperity gospel. This is you inviting God in to do what only He can through the resources that He has temporarily entrusted to you. I want you to take a look at this story on the screen from a couple in our church who have done that.

Cade & Jill: A Perspective on Generosity

Jill

I think one of the things that we talked about when we got married was, "We're going to get out of an apartment and be in a house." We talked a little bit about kids, but wanted to wait. I think that I envisioned being able to kind of move up the ladder.

Cade

We'd been looking through kind of rose-colored glasses because we just thought we're going to travel, and make money, and have kids, and this is going to be fun. You don't think about the possibility of, "Oh, we're going to have this health journey," or "There are going to be these challenges that we have to work through."

Jill

I think we both had different views of money in different ways. My parents were divorced when I was in high school, and I just saw money to be a big point of contention. So, I really didn't want to talk about money. I was just like, "You just decide, and you do everything." He was pretty good about, "No. We're a team."

Cade

We're in this together.

Jill

Yes. We're going to do it together.

Cade

We learned biblical stewardship, which means it's not our money, it's not our possessions. Everything we have here on earth is on loan from God. We can honor God with how we manage it.

Jill

I think at first it seemed kind of easy because social media wasn't really a thing then.

Cade

Or Starbucks.

Jill



Or Starbucks. But you know we only saw what we were doing and that we were kind of in our own lane and had our own goals. I think we thought kids would stretch us, and they did a little bit. But then I think we had some other challenges that really stretched us.

Caption

In 2013, Jill was diagnosed with sarcoma in her lungs. After five surgeries in over ten years and chemo medication, her tumors are currently stable.

Jill

I feel like that was a very difficult realization for me like, "Okay, what is important in life?" You know, it's not until you have that really hard time where you're both laying in bed in tears and trying to figure out some perspective.

Chad

Fruit grows in the valley. It's not in the mountains. There has been a lot of fruit in the last 10 years of surgeries Jill has had and medical challenges we've gone through, but God's been faithful. And I think through those challenges our faith has grown.

Jill

As young marrieds we saw God show up in different ways of providing. When we were having babies I had a lot of pregnancy complications with all four of them, and pre-term labor, and NICU stays, and we just needed to have a lot of physical needs met.

And we had friends come sit with me when I was on bed rest. Those little bits of faithfulness kept growing us and kept us going back to Him holding our hands out and just saying, "We're giving this to You."

Whether it was providing for basic things like groceries and having our budget met, paying for a car repair or whatever that was. Every little thing just constantly kept showing God's goodness and His faithfulness.

Chad

A year ago, going through the Awaken journey we prayed about the Awaken commitment and wrote it down, turned in the card, and then it was like three days later our furnace died and we had to buy a new furnace.

Jill

On our anniversary.

Chad



We kind of laughed. It's kind of like, "What's God doing?" I keep hearing stories of people who turn in their dollar amount, or they give and then God blesses them in this huge way. And it was the opposite for us. We had to buy a new furnace.

Now, I think if that had happened 15 years ago, maybe we would have had a different response. But I think we'd seen God providing in ways that were obvious.

But then other times, even though the van is, what? 14 years old. It's still running. And, yes, I'm frustrated that it doesn't have heat or air conditioning, but that's what the windows are for. You roll them down. But God is providing and our van still runs and it has 240,000 miles on it. So, we're thankful to see God provide in that way.

Chad

So, I've always heard the verse, "Where your treasure is there your heart will be also." I've taught that to many people through our Financial Foundations class. And we've lived that out as we've tried to give the best we can and give generously and give our treasure to God.

It recently hit me, just a new way to look at that verse. Brooklyn and our kids our God's gift to us. And my treasure is at Purdue. I care more about Purdue than I ever had. I've tried to find the time to... When do we go up there again? When is Dad's day? What's the football schedule look like? I now have Purdue clothes. I grew up a die hard IU fan, so this says a lot. My heart is with Brooklyn at Purdue.

Jill

Where God has us right now is not that we don't have big things to come or bigger obstacles in front of us, but I think we are in a season right now where God is saying, "What are you going to do with these little things?" We still have to release that and surrender that and trust God in those types of things too.

Chad

It's not always pretty. Yeah, it's a challenge, I think. We hear people say, "Well, the least I can do is pray." But I think that's the best thing we can do. As we've come through Jill's medical journey, as we've launched Brooklyn, as we've tried to release control of our finances I think that starts with prayer. That helps us to surrender a little better than we can on our own.

End Video

Aaron

Wow. Isn't that incredible? I appreciate Cade and Jill's transparency in all of that. I love what he said: You hear these stories about people who have made these big



commitments and then God comes through in big ways, and then our furnace broke on our anniversary. And yet we still see the goodness of God as He is providing.

I don't know what that looks like for you. I don't want to over promise things and say, "Hey, when you entrust things to God, you're going to win the Lottery the next day." Actually, you'd be missing the point. This isn't a give to get. This is inviting God in. And I want you to entrust Him with these things because the thing that will change your life the most is an encounter with the living God that comes by faith.

I've heard, over the last year, so many catalytic stories of people's faith taking gigantic steps forward when they've begun to invite God in and to trust Him with each of those bags.

One of my favorite stories is of one of our college students. She's a student at Butler. And during Awaken I was going through this series, and she felt really convicted that God was telling her that she needed to make her faith her own, not just her mom and dad's faith.

So, she said, "You know what? I actually want to make a financial commitment to this. God, I'm all in on Awaken." So, she made a decision. She actually has a Tik Tok page, I don't know all of the lingo—she does these videos as a lifestyle influencer of faith on campus. So, most of these videos that she would shoot would monetize about \$1,500 apiece.

Sitting right over here, she said, "God, the next two videos that I do, I'll commit 100 percent of the funds," she didn't have a job, and she was like, "I'll commit 100 percent of the funds to Awaken."

So, she shoots the videos. Posts them. And then she ran up to me on a Sunday, she was right over here. I'll never forget talking to her. She looked at me and she said, "Pastor Aaron, I just have to tell you this. I felt like God was telling me to commit these next two videos, whatever they monetized, to Awaken. By the way, you need to know that I really need a car. My car right now is being held together by zip ties and duct tape." I think that was her quote.

And she said, "I just need you to know that typically those videos monetize about \$1,500 apiece. Those two videos, to date, have monetized about \$30,000."

I remember looking at her and I said to her, "Well, Summer, what are you going to do?" And she goes, "Well, I'm going to give it to Awaken." And I said, "You have more faith than I do. You need a car." So, then I said this to her, "Summer, this is half the story. Watch what God will do with your faithfulness."

Then I asked her permission to share that story with our entire church. So, I did the very next Sunday. I shared that story. And then a lady emailed my office the next day and she said, "I was so moved by that. Could you put me in touch with Summer? I'd like to buy



her a new car.” This is a picture of them at the car lot where she went, and she bought Summer a car. It was amazing.

Now, that’s only half the story because earlier this year when I did a call out for the next generation to come down front to pray over them, “Here am I send me,” Summer was front and center. We just hired Summer on our staff. She starts tomorrow, by the way. And we are super thrilled for what she’s going to do. She was in the last service, and she just ran up to me and said, “Hey, I want to give you an update. Those videos have monetized about \$70,000.”

Guys, I just want you to know you can’t out give God. And there is a faith journey that God is inviting you to go on where you will entrust your bags to Him instead of carrying them.

And what we need right now—what some of you need right now in your faith journey more than anything else is an encounter and an experience. Or, as Paul would say it in verse 10:

“I want to know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised him from the dead. I want to suffer with him, sharing in his death, so that one way or another I will experience the resurrection from the dead!” Philippians 3:10-11 (NLT)

The way in which you have an experience with God is by faith. It’s by trusting God with something that doesn’t necessarily make sense to you but you’re saying, “God, I’m going to invite You in and I’m going to go on this faith journey with you.”

And, in fact, I would even say, right now, the thing that the world needs now, more than ever, are men and women who are following after Jesus who have experienced, not just the natural, but the supernatural of the Holy Spirit and now they are demonstrating that for others to experience for themselves.

What we need now more than anything else is an outpouring of the Holy Spirit to recognize it is not by my strength, it is not by my behavior, it is not by my accomplishments, but by the power of the Holy Spirit in my life that gets enacted by faith.

Paul would say to the Corinthians:

“I came to you in weakness—timid and trembling. And my message and my preaching were very plain. Rather than using clever and persuasive speeches, I relied only on the power of the Holy Spirit. I did this so you would trust not in human wisdom but in the power of God.” 1 Corinthians 2:3-5 (NLT)

Can I just invite you today into the power of God? Or, as Pastor Jon Tyson says it so well, “...a theology that cannot be ignored and a power that cannot be denied.”



Somebody today needs to respond to that power. I just want to invite you today to—here's the term surrender. And all surrender means is just an empty handedness before God. All surrender means is, "I'm going to stop trying to manage this. I'm going to stop trying to control this. I'm going to stop trying to strap on the bags and carry them by myself. God, as the old hymn says, "I surrender all."

And when you do that, the chains fall and you're inviting the power of God into your life to do what cannot fully make sense to you because it's not the natural, it's the supernatural that happens and gets enacted by faith.

So, I'm just wondering today if some of you need to entrust your life to Him for the very first time. Or others of you, you've begun to drift away from that and right now you just need to say, "I need to come back. I've been loading myself down with all of these bags, all of these burdens. I need to entrust them to God once again."

I just want to give you the opportunity to do that. I want to give you the opportunity, right where you are seated as we pray together to just come before a holy God.

God, right now we need an experience of Your power. We don't just need to know about it. We don't just need to sing about it. We don't just need to go through the motions of it, God, we need an experience of it. And that happens when we step out by faith.

So, Father, forgive us when we try to justify ourselves by our behavior where we try to look to all of these other things to help us feel at peace, feel okay, when all along You've asked us to trust what Jesus has done, past tense, on our behalf to justify us before you. It's a position that He died for us to have. Out of that position we can really begin to live for You.

So, Father, instead of strapping on the bags of responsibility, would You help us to entrust them to You? Would You help us to invite You into those so that You can do what only You can do.

We ask for a supernatural stirring of Your Holy Spirit in our lives right now that somebody suffering from spiritual blindness, right now, in this moment would come to see the power of the Holy Spirit.

God, we surrender all. We need from You what cannot be explained but it cannot be denied—the power of the Holy Spirit. We ask this in Jesus' name.

