

## Things God Gives Us in Abundance (Part 2—Promises and Responsibility)

by Bayless Conley

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Hello out on the plaza and the people actually watching around the world; I want to welcome you also. We have begun a new series on God's abundance. As I prayed and just really got quiet before God, I felt like He dropped something in my heart that I was supposed to share. And we looked at the first part of it last weekend. So, we're going to finish it today. What I felt the Holy Spirit put in my heart were three things that God gives to every believer in abundance. He doesn't give it sparingly, but He gives it to the overflow.

Last week, we talked about the fact that God gives a staggering amount of authority to each and every member of the body of Christ. And all of that authority is wrapped up in the mighty name of Jesus. We're going to look at the final two today. To begin with, we come to the second thing that God gives us all in abundance. He gives us an abundance of promises, an abundance of promises. 2 Peter 1, going to begin reading in verses 3–5,

<sup>3</sup> By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence. <sup>4</sup> And because of his glory and excellence, he has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world's corruption caused by human desires. <sup>5</sup> In view of all this, make every effort to respond to God's promises.

“He has given us great and precious promises, and it's through these promises that we share,” other translations say, “we partake of His divine nature.” Then he said, “In view of all this, make every effort to respond to His promises.” First, I want you to notice that His promises, it's plural. He's given us promises. He's given us an abundance of promises. Then he doesn't just say promises. He says, “They're great promises.” Great in scope in that they cover every area of human need. Great in power. Great in the sense that the One who gave the promises is great and able to fulfill them in every detail.

Then he didn't just say they're great promises that have been given to us, but they're great and precious. The word precious means “valuable.” There are very few things in the Scripture that God specifically calls precious. It's a really short list. I can think of one. It's in 1 Peter 1:18–19, and it says, “We haven't been redeemed with corruptible things like silver and gold but with the precious blood of Christ.” We were just singing about that precious blood a few minutes ago. As far as language goes, God puts the promises in the same category as the precious blood of Jesus as far as value.

All right, why are His promises so valuable to us? Well, we read it. It's because through them, we share in His divine nature. Through those promises, we share or partake of His divine nature. The promise is the connector. The promise is the conduit. The promise is the pipeline by which we share in/or receive from God's nature. My friend, God's nature covers

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every area of human need. Regardless of your background, culture, or upbringing, you've got four basic needs.

I'm sure we could all come up with more, but there's four basic needs that all human beings have in common. Number one, we have a need of life, eternal life, spiritual life. Sin has separated us from God. "The wages of sin is death." Well, when the Bible talks about spiritual death, it doesn't mean to cease to be. It means to be cut off from the life of God, and what we need is life. The Bible says, "God so loved the world, He gave His only begotten Son. Whoever believes in Him wouldn't perish, but would have life, everlasting life." That's the answer to that spiritual need.

Every one of us, we need health in our bodies. That's a priority with every human being. Thirdly, every one of us needs peace for our minds, and then we need abundance. We need supply. You need to be able to put food on the table, pay the rent, pay the house payment, put fuel in your vehicle, or whatever. So there's material need. We all share those four things in common.

My friend, God's nature covers every one of those needs. Whenever God in the Bible whenever He says, "I am something," He's talking about His nature. It's not something that's dispensational. It's not something that passes away when one era ends and another begins. When God says, "I am something," it's His nature. He is that all the time. Think about Jesus. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life."

It's eternal life. It's the word Zoe. The same word translated into eternal life in John 3:16, self-perpetuating, self-existing, eternal life, life as God has it. It is His nature. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth. I am the life."

When it comes to healing, in Exodus 15, God said, "I am Jehovah Rapha. I am the Lord who heals you. I am the Lord, Your physician." God's nature is health and wholeness. When it comes to material supply, in the book of Genesis, God said to Abraham, "I am El Shaddai. I am the all-sufficient one. I am the God of more than enough. I am the God of abundant supply." Surplus, abundance it is the nature of God. When it comes to peace, in the book of Judges, it says, "The Lord is peace. Jehovah Shalom." He didn't just have peace. The Lord is peace. The Scripture calls our God the God of peace in many places. Jesus is the prince of peace. Peace and tranquility, all of those things are the nature of God.

What is the thing that connects me with God's nature? It's the promises. Through these great and precious promises, I share in His nature. You take the promise away you've removed the pipeline. Without a promise, you have no connector. Without a promise, there's no conduit. The promise is the conduit. We've been given promises, a plurality of promises, and they're great, and they're precious. They're valuable. Why? Because through them, we share in His divine nature.

Some of you may remember me sharing the story. It was actually about a friend of mine. Truth be told, it was a friend of mine's little brother. Occasionally, he would hang out with us when we were kids. And then he grew up, and I became pretty close with the younger brother as well as, the older brother. On occasion, back in the old life, we partook of illegal substances together. And we would hang out from time to time. Then I moved away, and in a period of time, he moved overseas. And he was overseas, actually living in the Middle East for several years working. I came back to California. He finished his stint over there in the Middle East, came back, and he heard that Bayless Conley had become a Christian. He couldn't believe his ears! People started telling him, "He's different. He's different."

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He rings me up, says, “Look, can we get lunch?” I said, “Sure.” We went to a little pizza place, actually not far from where we are right now. We’re sitting in there, and I don’t know why, I just had it in my mind that I couldn’t be really straightforward. And I didn’t want to come on too strong in sharing the message of the cross with him. I was doing what I refer to as stealth evangelism. I was making innuendos and dropping little hints in the conversation, but I wasn’t just putting it out there.

We had a nice lunch. An hour and a half, a couple of hours, and we walk outside. We’re walking to our car; he said, “Look, Bayless.” I said, “What?” He said, “What do I need to do to be saved?” I said, “Well, the Bible says if you believe in your heart, God raised Jesus from the dead, confessing with your mouth as Lord, you will be saved.” He said, “Well, I do believe that. I believe He’s the Son of God.” And there’s people walking around us in the parking lot. He looks up in the sky, lifts his hands, says, in a really loud voice, “God, I believe Jesus is Your Son. I believe He died on the cross. I believe He’s raised from the dead, and I accept Him as my Lord right now.” He got saved right there in the parking lot, despite me.

Now what was he lacking? He was lacking a promise. When I gave him the promise, he had the pipeline. And he became a partaker of God’s nature, which is life. In Acts 12, there’s an interesting story. It opens up, it says Herod was persecuting the Church. And he took James, the brother of John, one of the 12 apostles, and had him beheaded. He saw that it pleased the Jews, so he seized Peter and put him in jail. And he’s going to wait till Passover season’s over; he’s going to bring Peter out, and he’s going to behead Peter as well.

And so we’ve got Peter in jail. The Passover season’s ending. They’re in there sharpening the axe, probably the same one they just used on James. And the Church is praying like crazy. What’s Peter doing? He’s sleeping. He’s sleeping! In fact, he’s so peaceful. This is like the night before. It says they were about to bring him out, literally to bring him out for execution. He’s sleeping so soundly God sent an angel and had to kick him in the side to wake him up.

So, Peter’s there partaking of God’s nature, which is peace. But how? Peter, how is it that you’ve got peace in a situation like that? You’re hours away from being beheaded. How can you be sleeping? How can you have peace in a time like this? Well, he had a promise. You can read it; I believe it’s John 18. Jesus prophesied to him and told him the manner in which he would die. And Jesus told him, “When you’re old, this is going to happen.” He’s not old yet. He’s got a promise from Jesus that he’s not going to die till he’s old. So, “Why should I stay awake? I have a promise.”

He responded to that promise by resting quietly and trusting. Remember, we read in view of all of this, make every effort to respond to God’s promises. Sometimes, that’s the way we need to respond. Other times we need to respond to a promise through action as opposed to just quietly resting.

The woman with the issue of blood, we know her story well. She comes in the press behind, she’s been suffering for 12 years, and she grabs the hem of Jesus’ garment. She kept saying—in the Greek language; it’s in a continuous verb form—she kept saying over and over, “If I can just touch the hem of His garment. If I can just touch His clothes. If I can just touch His clothes.” She said it over and over and over. And when she grabbed the hem of His garment, she was made whole. Well, what was she doing? She was acting on a promise.

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In the last book of the Old Testament, Malachi, in the fourth chapter, there's a prophecy about the coming Messiah. One of the names of the Messiah is the Son of righteousness. The verse in Malachi says, "When the Son of righteousness comes, when the Messiah comes, He will have healing in His wings." The word wings there is the same Hebrew word translated as "the border of a garment or the hem of the garment" throughout the Old Testament. When the Son of righteousness comes, when the Messiah comes, there will be healing in the hem of His garment.

She said, "If I can just touch the hem of His garment." What's she doing? She's acting on a promise. The promise is the conduit. The promise is the pipeline, and she became a partaker of God's nature, which is health and wholeness. The Scripture says this, Matthew 14:35–36,

<sup>35</sup> And when the men of that place recognized Him, they sent out into all that surrounding region, brought to Him all who were sick, <sup>36</sup> and begged Him that they might only touch the hem of His garment. And as many as touched it were made perfectly well.

They were all Jews. They were steeped in the law. They had memorized the Old Testament. They knew the prophecy about the Messiah, and they begged, "Let us just touch the hem of His garment. Because there's a promise that when the Son of righteousness, the Messiah, comes, there will be healing in the border of His garment." They were responding to a promise.

You may have heard me share it before, but when I got saved, I was going to a little Pentecostal church, and I'm a brand-new Christian. I had gotten this terrible skin condition. It was not just unsightly; it was on my arms and a few other places on my body. But it just literally felt like my skin was on fire. I wanted to pull my skin off. I'd gotten medications, and nothing helped. I'm a brand-new Christian. I'm reading my Bible. In fact, it was my very first Bible. I got it for \$0.35 at a yard sale. Best investment I ever made in my life. I got to the book of James, first time I've ever read it. James 5:14–15,

<sup>14</sup> Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. <sup>15</sup> And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.

I was absolutely elated; then, I was struck with a thought. Actually, two thoughts, number one, what's an elder? And number two, does our church have them? I didn't know. I went down to the phone booth. There was a lady I knew in church, I looked up her number, and I called her. I said, "Look, this is Bayless, and I've got this skin condition. I've had it for a while, medications, nothing's working. It's getting worse and worse. But I was reading in James 5," and I quoted the promise to her. I said, "I got two questions." I said, "What's an elder?" and she told me. I said, "Do we have those guys in our church?" She said, "Yes, we do." I said, "Okay, who? Tell me who?" and she mentioned a name.

And when she mentioned the name, my heart sank. I knew who he was. He was an old farmer in the church, and he scared the living daylights out of me. He would pray in the church. Just the way the services ran there, they had a lot of public prayer. And this guy would pray a lot. But when he prayed, he would jerk. Like, "Jesus Lord," and it just freaked me out. This is true. When I'd come to church, I'd come in the back, and I'd scan the church. "Okay, he's on that side? I'm sitting over here." I would sit as far away from that guy as I could. Because honestly, he scared

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me. I didn't want to be anywhere near this guy that jerked and shimmied when he prayed. It had to be him.

So, I look up his number in the phonebook. I call him up. I said, "Hey, look, I'm Bayless Conley. I'm the guy with long hair that started coming to your church. I got this skin condition. I was reading in the book of James. It says if you're sick, and you call for the elders of the church, and they anoint you with oil and pray over you, you will be healed." I said, "They told me you were an elder." I said, "Where do you live? Give me your address." He gives me the address. I said, "You there now?" He said, "Yep," I said, "I'm on my way." I got in my truck, and I drove out to his farm. I went and knocked on the door. He answers the door with a bottle of oil in his hand. Then he said, "Thank You, Jesus."

True. I just closed my eyes. I never opened them again. I felt him put the oil on me, and I heard him praying. I know you don't have to feel anything to know that God has worked, but it was like electricity went through my mind. Within 24 hours, that skin condition completely disappeared. Completely disappeared.

The conduit is a promise. We've been given great and precious promises. Become familiar with them, knowing that the One who gave them cannot lie. And He has power to fulfill each and every promise.

When Harrison was four years old, I'm in one part of the house, and I can hear him in the kitchen. He's talking to his mom. He says, "Mom, can I have a toy bow and arrows?" She goes, "Harrison, I don't know. That's your daddy's department. Bow and arrows is not my department. You're going to have to talk to your dad." He trundles across the house and says, "Dad." Looks at my face, says, "Dad, can I have a bow and arrows?" I said, "Sure." I'll never forget it. His eyes got big, and he ran into the kitchen shouting, "Mama, mama! Daddy, he said it! Daddy, he said it! Daddy, he said it! Daddy, he said it! I can have it! Daddy, he said it!" Over and over, "Daddy, he said it!" That ought to be our attitude whenever we come across one of God's promises. "Daddy said it! Daddy said it!" As far as he was concerned, it was an absolute done deal. Why? Because Daddy said it. Daddy made a promise. You've been given great and precious promises, and through those promises, we share in His divine nature.

All right, let's move on to the third thing. God has given to each and every one of us in abundance, responsibility. He's given us an abundance of responsibility.

Second Corinthians 5:17–21,

<sup>17</sup> This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! <sup>18</sup> And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him.

God has given us this task of reconciling people to Him.

<sup>19</sup> For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. <sup>20</sup> So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!" <sup>21</sup> For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.

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God has given us this task of reconciling people to Him. He gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. We are God's ambassadors. God is pleading through us. We speak on the behalf of Christ. That is an abundance of responsibility. We're ambassadors. Every one of us, we're ambassadors.

I was doing some meetings in Brussels, Belgium, many years ago. And the UN headquarters is there in Brussels. One of the pastors that was hosting the meetings actually had some connections to the UN, and he arranged for me to come speak at the UN headquarters. They invited a bunch of ambassadors from around the world. Not all of them turned up, but quite a few of them did.

I'm in this room with all these ambassadors, and I just shared a simple gospel message, an encouraging message with them. Well, you know, an ambassador is one that represents his government. He represents his kinsmen. He represents his country. He represents his king. He speaks on their behalf. In Philippians 3:20, it says that our citizenship is in heaven. We officially represent our King and our homeland. We speak on their behalf.

One of the main tasks of an ambassador is that he or her, they work for peace. Well, my friend, Jesus has brought peace with God through the blood of His cross. And we are to work to bring people into peace with God, through Jesus Christ. It's our task as an ambassador. We convey that message both through words and through works. In verse 18 that we read, listen to it from the Amplified Bible. It says, "We have been given the ministry of reconciliation. That by word and deed we might bring others into harmony with Him." We need to share the message, but we also need to live changed lives.

When I came back to California, I hadn't seen family in probably four years. The last—well, actually, my dad had disowned me by that time. If you asked anyone, if you asked my dad if he had any kids, he'd mention my sister. I no longer existed to him, and there was good reason for that. I think I kind of deserved that, the way that I acted. It was the only way that he knew how to cope with all of the pain that I had caused the family because of my lifestyle. Anyway, I got radically saved. I come back to California. I'm no longer using drugs. I'm no longer living a crazy lifestyle.

And I came on a little strong; there's no doubt about it. I was very zealous. My mom got saved, sister got saved. But my dad, he looked me in the eyes, says, "Look, I liked you better when you were on drugs." But he watched. He watched. He watched me. He watched my mother. He watched my sister. He saw that our lives had genuinely been changed. There was no denying it, and he came to faith in Christ. He was the last one in our immediate family to get saved. But thank God, he got saved, but it was through watching.

Now, the need to live what we preach is incredibly important, but that does not change the reality that we still need to share the message verbally. The message is this, that God has reconciled the world through the death of Christ. God is no longer counting up against men, their sins. Jesus has paid the price for the sin of the world. God so loves the world that He gave His Son. There is a way out. There is a rescue. You don't have to die in your sins. You can have a changed life. The grace of God is being extended to you freely. That is the message. And as His ambassadors, we should make sure that we get the message right.

There was a famous evangelist years back. He was a friend. Like all of us, some people think the preacher takes his shirt off when he gets home, and he is sprouting wings. Listen, just ask my wife; it ain't true. We've all got this treasure in earthen vessels. I think he had some issues

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with anger. I know one thing for sure, that he put his ministry above his marriage. And his wife left him. She was staying with some friends of ours. She wouldn't talk to him, and I became the liaison between him and his wife. She wouldn't talk to him, but she'd talk to me. And he couldn't talk to her except through me.

I'd spend an hour with him on the phone. And he says, "Well, go tell her this, and tell her this, and tell her this." I would share with her, and she'd say, "Well, you tell him this and tell him that." For two weeks, I'm doing this. I know it was more complex than I make it sound. There's certainly more moving parts in there, but I do know there were some anger issues on his part. He wrongly put ministry above his marriage. His marriage suffered because of it. She wanted to genuinely be reconciled, but she wanted him to repent. She wanted to see some change in him, but she wanted reconciliation.

One day I told him, I said, "Look." I said, "You've got to put some time in this. You don't want to lose your marriage. Cottonwood Church, we will pay your salary and the salary of your entire staff for two weeks. Don't do any meetings. Don't do any ministry. Spend those two weeks winning your wife back. Give her those two weeks. Undistracted, give her those two weeks and love her, and meet with her. I know she wants to be reconciled. She'll do it." And he declined the offer.

Yes, I got a bit hacked off at him. She wants to reconcile, but she wants there to be repentance first. What if, because of my frustration with him, I changed the wife's message? I said, "Look, you are hopeless, and she knows it. And she says that she hopes you die and that you go to hell." Well, that's the attitude and the message of some in the church toward this sinful world.

It's like Jonah. He says, "Jonah, I want you to go preach to Nineveh, the great Assyrian capital. There's 120,000 people living there." Jonah says, "I don't want to do it." So he runs away to Tarshish. He says, "I'm not going to preach to those Assyrians, those wicked people. No Way!" Tarshish is modern-day Spain, as far as you could get away in the known world from Nineveh. And the storm comes; we all know the story. Well, that was just God in His mercy. Not necessarily for Jonah, but God is compassionate toward 120,000 lost people in this capital city. He said, "Jonah, I need you to go and preach." God sends a storm. And then Jonah confesses to the sailor, saying, "Look, God's doing this because I'm disobeying Him, and I'm not going to go preach." He said, "Throw me overboard, and the storm will stop."

Now, you realize Jonah didn't know that God had prepared a great fish to swallow him. Jonah thought he was going to die. Jonah would have rather died than preach to those Ninevites. Because he knew God was merciful, and there's a chance they might repent, and God wouldn't destroy them. He knew there's a chance that God would show mercy to them.

After three days and three nights in the fish, Jonah changes, "God, I'll go." He goes and preaches in that great capital city, and they repent. Now, maybe it's because Jonah was an Israeli nationalist, and the Assyrians were the enemies of Israel. Maybe that's why he hated them so much. Maybe because he was a prophet, he knew prophetically that they would be the undoing of Israel, that they would eventually conquer and enslave Israel. Or maybe it was just because he knew they were a brutal, sinful people.

The Assyrians were an interesting lot. When they went in and conquered a city, they didn't set up a garrison like many other nations would do. Like Rome or other nations, they set up a garrison with a military there to keep a presence and to keep everyone under their thumb. The Assyrians never did that. They would take all the men in the city, skin them alive and

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hang them on the city walls of the conquered city. Everybody was afraid to rebel against the Assyrians. They were absolutely brutal, wicked people. Maybe that's why Jonah thought maybe they deserved to die.

But when he goes and preaches, the Bible says, from the king down to the lowliest person, they began to fast, and cry out to God for mercy, and pray. And they humbled themselves before God. And the hand of judgment was stayed, and God had mercy on them. Jonah said, "I knew it. I knew it. I told You this when I first ran away. This is why I ran. I knew that You'd be merciful. I knew You might have compassion on them. That's why I didn't want to go." The whole end of the book is God dealing with Jonah. Said, "Look, are not these people valuable?"

What's the message that we're supposed to be bringing to the world? There was a guy; his name was Tom. He got saved at Cottonwood many years ago. He's been in heaven for quite a few years now. Tom, when he came to the church, he had been involved many, many years in a very sinful lifestyle. In particular, with his sexuality was just way out of bounds from what God says is right and holy. He became gloriously saved; life was changed at Cottonwood. And he became a volunteer in the church. And actually helped us quite a bit with the television ministry, and doing our very first newsletters that we ever did, that we sent around the globe to people. He became a dear friend and a close ally in the work of the church.

He shared with me one day. He says, "Bayless, you know when I first started experimenting with my sexuality." He said, "I was really conflicted. I didn't feel right about it. But honestly, I was looking for acceptance and for love. I just didn't want to do it, but I was conflicted. And I ran into some Christians one day, and they actually had their Bibles with them, and they knew what I was up to. They pointed their fingers at me and said, 'God hates you, and you are going to burn in hell.'"

He said, "That was it. It pushed me over the edge." I just said, "Forget you guys. And I just went full bore into that lifestyle." I'll never forget Tom telling me. He says, "Bayless if they would have just shared the right message with me. If they would have just told me that God loved me so much. That He sent His Son to die for me, that I was valuable to God." He said, "I'm sure I would have gotten saved that day." He said, "But as a result, I took a detour for 25 years of my life."

Now I'm not talking about sharing a watered-down version of the gospel. We can never do that. Because of the clear teaching of Scripture, we cannot condone someone's sin, be it with their sexuality or with any other aspect of their life. Because of the clear teaching of Scripture, we can't hate people either. We need to love them, and we need to share the right message with them.

The message is, "Come as you are." But it's not this; it's not, "Come as you are, and you don't even have to be willing to change." That's not the message. The very first message Jesus preached, Mark 1, He said, "Repent and believe the gospel. The Kingdom of God is at hand." Repent and believe the gospel. Repentance and believing always have to go together. Repentance means an inward change of heart resulting in an outward change of direction. That I come, I know I can't change myself, but I'm willing to change. That's the message that we have to bring. Jesus put it this way, Matthew 10:37–39. He said,

<sup>37</sup> He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. <sup>38</sup> And he who does not take his

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cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. <sup>39</sup> He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.

The same passage is in Luke. Luke ends it with Jesus saying this, Luke 14:33, “And so whoever is not ready to give up all that he has may not be My disciple.” We do preach a message of love. Christ died for all, and you can come. He will not turn anyone away. But it’s not, “Okay, well, I can hang on to my views about sexuality, or gender, or the way I handle money, or politics, or race. I’m just going to hang on to this stuff, and I’m going to come, but I’m not willing to change.” It doesn’t work that way. When we come, we need to come with a repentant heart. Say, “Lord, I’m willing to change. I’m going to put my trust in You.” It’s a radical invitation, and it’s what the world needs.

Some of you may have followed the news story here just recently. A couple of environmental activists went into the Leopold Museum in Vienna, Austria. And they smuggled some sort of black liquid in, and they threw this black liquid all over a masterpiece by Gustav Klimt to ruin it. Knowing full well they’re going to be arrested and spend time in jail. They said, “No, we need to bring attention to the environment. We’re willing to sacrifice for this cause.” Listen, however you feel about the environment, whatever side of the fence or sitting on the fence you fall when it comes to the data, you got streams of data on both sides of that argument; I’m telling you, there’s a greater cause than that, and it’s one worth going to jail for. It’s one worth dying for.

It’s the message of the cross. My friend, heaven is real. Hell is real. This earthly life is short. Our time here is just a breath, and then it’s gone. Every one of us will spend an eternity somewhere. There is no greater message; there is no greater challenge. I’m telling you, I believe the world is looking to be challenged. Give your life to Christ, and then you are an ambassador. There is nothing greater that you can give your life to. This is worth giving up your life for. I was just looking, Leonard Ravenhill, English preacher; I think I’ve read every book that he ever printed. Read all of his sermons. For the first time the other day, I just was reading about Ravenhill, and they had a picture of his gravestone. I’d never seen it before. On his gravestone, the words were chiseled, “Is what you’re living for worth Christ dying for?” He’s in heaven, and he’s still preaching. Is what you’re living for worth Christ dying for? We have a great responsibility, my friend. We’re God’s spokesmen, God’s spokeswomen. We’re ambassadors for the King. We represent our homeland.

The message is, hey, God is not counting up against men their trespasses any longer. He’s canceled them through the cross of Christ. If you’ll come with a repentant heart willing to accept His Word as your final authority, my friend, you can be washed clean. And you can be made new, given a new life that’ll take you into heaven.

We’ve been given an abundance of promises. We’ve been given an abundance of responsibility. I want to pray for you. I suppose two things. You may have been brought here by a friend, family member. Maybe you came by yourself today. Maybe out on the plaza, maybe watching wherever, and you’ve not fully committed your life to Christ. Listen, it is an all-in call. This isn’t one foot in the rowboat and one foot on the dock; it just doesn’t work that way.

Jesus said ‘If you love father or mother more’—you can’t hold anything closer than Him. He comes before my family. Now ministry, my relationship with Him comes number one. My wife comes number two, my kids come after that, and then ministry comes after that. I can’t minister to His bride if I don’t first minister adequately to my bride. I can’t take care of His family if I don’t take care of my family, and the Scripture actually teaches that. I don’t equate what I’m doing

## Things God Gives Us in Abundance (Part 2—Promises and Responsibilities)

right now with my personal relationship with God. This is an overflow from that relationship. But that relationship is number one, and it comes before everyone and everything else. Everything.

Just close your eyes for a minute if it helps you. If you want to keep them open, you can do that too. Sometimes it just kind of helps us to connect with our own heart. I want to encourage you. If you're in here and you've not sold out to Jesus, maybe there is a divine conviction upon your heart now; you ought to thank God for that. If you're sensing that, if you're feeling that, God is not through with you, my friend. He's got a road for you to walk. He's got work for you to do. But you need to make that decision to go all in for Him, all in for Him.

“Lord, we humble ourselves before You. We thank You for Your great sacrifice. We thank You for Your unconditional love. And I pray that You would help people. That one that has struggled. That one that has gone from this cause, to that cause, to another cause, and they've come up empty. I pray that they would anchor their life in the greatest of all causes.”

Right now, just in your own way, in your own words, just like my friend did, my friend's name was Billy, that prayed out in the parking lot of that Italian restaurant. He just said to God. I didn't give him words to say. But he just said, “God, I do believe Jesus is Your Son.” And he confessed Jesus is Lord. If you want to be saved, just do that right now. Tell Him. Tell Him. Tell Him.

“Lord, we take the mantle of this responsibility seriously. Father, we realize that we've all, each and every one of us has been called as an ambassador. We ask You to give us divine appointments. Help us to recognize when we should speak up and when we should just let our light shine. But Lord, use us; we pray. Use us. We know when we leave these four walls, we're walking out into the mission field. And that people that we meet with today, and people that we meet tomorrow, they're going to be part of that harvest field. Help us to faithfully thrust in the sickle. Help us to faithfully let our light shine before them and to share the message of reconciliation with people. Lord, thank You for entrusting us with this great responsibility. And Lord, while we're at it, we just want to thank You for all of Your mighty precious promises. That through those, we can partake of every aspect of Your divine nature in the precious name of Jesus. Amen. Amen.”

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