**Investing Together**

**Hebrews 12 (ESV)**

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(Missionary)

Those of you who do not know me, because this church has changed since we first came here in 1997, I’m David Beakley. My wife, Carol, would be here, but she just has left to catch a flight to go be with our daughter, our second, who just gave birth the other day to our seventh grandchild. So number 7 was born on Friday, I believe. So she’s going to help with that. We had our third born, he gave birth, well, he didn’t give birth, (Laughter!) but his wife gave birth to their third child in December. So we’re here for a time to see grandkids and get caught up as well as just be able to be here and just to be with people, because church is family.

Just to give you an idea, we’ve been in the field for 20 years, this July 1st. Just so you know, in 1997, we came to Bethany Baptist on Knoxville. It was a church member that invited us. We had both grown up in church. I would have believed I was a Christian, but I didn’t have a Bible in my house. I hadn’t attended church but once every three or four years. A neighbor just kept coming to us and saying, “It’s going to be great!” So we went to Bethany Baptist in about April of 1997. They said, “You’re going to love the pastor,” but he wasn’t there. They had a missionary from Africa. The guy must have been about 75. I thought, “Great!” I didn’t tell this at first service, but I was a guy who believed a pastor was a guy who couldn’t get a job and a missionary was a guy who couldn’t be a pastor. (Laughter!) So I said, “This is really it for me.” So it was a disaster.

We politely kept refusing our neighbor and never heard more about it. Until just through a series of events in 1998, we found ourselves coming back to Bethany Baptist Church. It was not because something was drawing us. There were some random events that took place. God was moving and we showed up. After about three or four Sundays here, there was instant conversion. It was radical because it meant now church is a seven day a week life. It’s no longer like, “Are you going to come to Sunday night or not? Are you going to do this or that?” This is what we do. I was all wrapped up in a corporate career, so that was a radical change. But I didn’t know how to navigate in it. But the Lord was faithful and we were moving in that.

This church family was very gracious and faithful at the time through discipleship. The pastoral staff here sent me to Seminary. Our family went over to California and got trained at a place called the Master’s Seminary. After a couple years of Seminary, this church, Bethany Baptist Church, actually sent us to Africa. I believe we were the first actual commissioned, sent missionaries after being ordained in this church, to Africa. So if a neighbor brought you today (Laughter!) now is the time to be concerned. (Laughter!) Don’t think this is a once in a lifetime event kind of thing.

This church has been very faithful. This church has made several trips to us. We’ve taken them to Mozambique and around. Actually, several other people, because of Bethany Baptist’s investment, have gone on to leave their jobs here in Peoria to be trained to be pastors and serving either on the mission field or in the pastorate and just being trained to help in being church members. So as a result of one investment, more keeps coming and has. So this morning, I’m privileged that we get to talk about investing. I’ve got the title here. *All In: Investing Together*.

That’s an important word; together. Everything in church is about together. I didn’t understand that for so many years. God does this for our joy. I’m told I get a little more freedom here on the second service, which is great! Just so you understand, my average is like 75 or 80 minutes. We’re not going to do that today, but I understand. But now I’m not going to have people pacing back and forth. (Laughter!)

America has rugged individualism. You go to Africa and everything there is communal. If you’re not communal, what are you doing? So church is a natural kind of thing there. Here, it’s like it’s the church of individuals. I’ve learned communalism quite a bit and the value of that. It’s not wrong. I was just reading through the book of Acts this morning and saw how much community is in there. So this series that has been provided for you over this last month, is pretty important as you think about that word “together” in every aspect. It takes everybody pulling together because how would we have a body without gifts and different gifts and different roles and responsibilities and letting everybody participate? As opposed to in America, let’s have a small team and play the best players. But there is not a whole lot of joy in that. So we’re all in, in investing together. What we’re going to talk about here in investing is not what you would probably think because there are some things of what I call the extreme highest order. It begins with salvation.

In this church, knowing what is taught, the doctrines of grace, there is a doctrine called eternal security, which means when God saves, He saves forever. Amen? (Amen!) None can take you out of His hand when God saves. When I was talking to a friend of mine in high school who gets down because he’s had some issues in his life, a lot of sin, and feeling like, “Well, I’ve messed up so much.” I love just this thought. Are you telling me that one more sin is actually tipping the scales to where God says, “The blood of Christ can’t pay for that. It’s worth a lot, but not more than that one sin I’m going to pay for.” Really? If you want to ever encourage a discouraged sinner, just point him and say, “Here’s what was paid. Let’s consider it a slight overpayment on your account and you’ll be okay.” Eternal security means when you’re saved, you don’t doubt it at all. But that’s only half the side of the coin. That’s only one side of the coin.

The other side of the coin is called assurance of salvation, which is what we see. Am I sure? What about me? Am I one of those who are saved? Am I one of those? 2 Peter tells us all about it in chapter 1. That’s why you add to your faith these things with diligence, courage, diligence “Add to your faith,” Peter says. He doesn’t say, add faith as number one. He says add to your faith. Why? “So that you can be sure,” he says. Otherwise, you’re blind and short-sighted. That’s a truth, and we walk feeling defeated. Why do we do that? Because we’re not walking with the Lord. We don’t see the Lord in view. God is not real. What’s real is am I going to keep my job? Am I sick? Is my family going to break apart? All the things that we worry about as we’re trying to actually succeed in life. You think walking in life is about joy and getting success, and all we do is play defense the whole time. Dad’s, at least this dad, you just play defense pretty much all day long, thinking, “Let nothing break. Are the kids okay? Is everything alright?” That’s all we do. We want to have assurance. 2 Peter tells us. But you know, there is a way of having assurance through investing.

Investing we can think of in terms of what you do when you put your hand in your pocket or you give some time or I’ll get your lunch. No, that’s the effect. That’s not the cause. When we talk investing, let’s talk the cause. That’s what we’re going to get to here. So why is it critical that we invest together? That’s our question we’re going to answer today. Why is it critical that we invest together? More specifically, what are we investing in? We have to know that. It’s not the things you would think about. Because there is an ultimate cause that drives all other investing. It’s growing our faith together. Paul says what in Romans 14? Everything done without faith is sin. Everything! Buying something for somebody, giving somebody a ride, helping out in a thing, if it’s done without faith, God doesn’t want to look at it. We need to grow our faith together.

Now, notice that I said grow our faith. I didn’t say add to our faith. I didn’t say we need to have more faith. You grow the faith you have. You don’t need more faith. In Africa there are people who say, “I need more faith. Lord, give me more faith.” Jesus answers that in Luke 17. He says, “You guys are ridiculous!” That’s kind of a paraphrase, I understand. (Laughter!) But you can kind of hear the tone in His words. When Jesus doesn’t give a yes or no answer and He just gives you a story, that says He is trying to make the point. You don’t need more faith. If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry bush, “Go into the ocean,” and it would obey you. What’s He talking about? Well, He’s talking about this. It’s not your faith that generates anything. It doesn’t generate power. Power comes from God. What is faith then? Faith is what is called the instrument.

So, we don’t have it up here, but over there, you see those outlets on the wall. Now, if I had a plug with a wire that attached to something here and I plug it into the wall, I’m going to get 110 volts every time. If I walk around and hold that wire, how many volts do I get? Zero. But I plug it into the wall and I get 110. Faith is what I hold in my hand and I connect to the power of God, believing I’m going to get 110 out of that. Now, if I believe a lot harder and I get four cables, I’m not going to get 111. I’m not going to get 130 or 200. I’m going to get 110. More doesn’t get you more. You get the full amount that is coming out of there. Now, for you engineers, which I know there are plenty, if I had a 2-inch thick gold plated cable with the little two things coming out the end and I plug that in there, what would I get? 110. If I had a 4-inch thick cable, I would get 110. So I have a bigger, stronger cable, but I’m not going to get more. I screw it in and I’m going to get 110. So having more faith doesn’t buy anything. You just need to get connected.

Now, here’s the flip side. Back in the 1980’s when we had one child, Carol and I were leaving the house and I was looking for the keys. Where are the keys? I can’t find the keys. All we had was us. We were taking Josh somewhere. He’s like two or three. He was walking around. Where are the keys? I can’t find them. I turned to look and guess where they are? They went right into that plug. (Laughter!) The ignition key, all the way. I’m going, “Oh man!” That’s a nightmare! What do you think that key plugged into that socket gets you? 110. (Laughter!) You get full power. If you stuck a paper clip in there, you get 110. It’s the same as the gold cable. So why do we want to go get a gold cable? Because there is going to be a wind that comes. There is going to be a shaking that comes. There is going to be something that happens and you need to be plugged in. You need to be as tightly plugged in as possible, holding on tight. You don’t want to just say, “Yes, it’s great! I’m there. I’m on.” You want to be plugged in. So we need to grow our faith to the size of a cable so we are locked in, because everything done by faith is pleasing to God. We want that kind of faith, right?

What’s our issue? Why do we have lack of assurance of salvation? Because our faith tends to fall right out of the socket. That’s how come. Things come. Things shake. Peter looks at the waves and he falls down in the ocean or falls in the lake. You look around you. You listen to the internet. Social media, oh my! I need some help. So we need to grow our faith into something that is solid. That is the point, because everything comes from that. That is our investing that we want to do.

Now, where do we go to find out about faith? Well, we’re going to be in Hebrews 12, but where we go in finding a definition is Hebrews chapter 11. That’s our definition. Hebrews 11 tells us about faith. What’s interesting about faith is faith is the same Greek word all the way throughout. You see belief, trust, faith, faithful, all those kinds of words. It’s the same word in Greek. We give it kind of different spins and nuances. Now, before I get into this definition, I want to tell you again a biblical picture which will help us as you understand what we’re trying to do today.

Jesus gave a parable that is known by most. It was when He first started speaking in parables. He told the parable of the sower or the parable of the soils. A sower went out to sow. He threw seed out on the ground and it bounced on the sidewalk, bounced on the stony path, and the birds eat it up and nobody gets anything. There is no faith there at all. None! Satan takes it so that people can’t be saved, He says in Luke. But the second throws out on soil and it immediately takes root. Immediately! I like that word. It goes down and the plant springs up. It’s starting to bloom but then, because of the stony soil and it can’t get down where the water really is, it just got that sudden adrenaline boost of water to get you something. It used all its energy to get those few little sprouts. The sun comes up and burns the plant out, and we’re done. That’s really the first seed that took root. The second seed that took root went down deep, got past the rocks, but now, here come the thorns and the weeds, things that compete for the water. These are things that compete for its attention. These are things that compete and come in and take this life out and just chokes the life out and there is no joy for sure. Then that plant dies.

But the last, the seed goes down. It fights through the rocks, fights through the thorns, gets down deeper into the soil and then comes up and what does He say? There is 30, 60 and 100-fold production. That’s what Jesus says. That’s what we’re looking for. It’s not to say I’m trying to motivate you through the Word to become better Christians. I’m saying that is the Christian. The other two are not. Some Christians do 30. Some do 100. They both are doing to their maximum for their Lord. The others, they just turned off. They just made a mistake. They fell out of the socket. So what’s our charge, today? We need to stay connected. We don’t want to be competing with thorns. We don’t want to be competing with rocks and find out, “I’m so defeated. I couldn’t begin to tell you I’m a Christian.”

I’ll give you one little illustration. There is a guy that was at Master’s Seminary, at Grace Community Church. Now he pastors a church in Florida. He was in Air Force Intelligence and was in a listing post up in Alaska. He thought he was a Christian, but there was no way. His parents were godly people, but he just kind of had his own way of things up there. There were 10 or 12 guys and some new guy shows up. He was a big Swedish guy. He shows up and was kind of loud and bouncing around. But he was singing hymns and he just loved the Lord with all his fullness. He loved the Lord! My friend would say, “Can you keep it down? I’m trying to sleep!” This Swedish guy was talking and everything was about the Lord. Everything! And here is this young guy who is believing, “Yes, I’m a Christian. I’m an American Christian.” Then he turned to the Swedish guy and said, “Hey, I’m a Christian.” The Swedish guy stopped and said, “Really?” The Lord used that to drive him immediately to his knees and he got saved and now he is pastoring a church in Florida. But it’s that moment of self-deception. All it took was for a 30-fold, 60-fold, 100-fold person to say, “Really? Who would have thought? I wouldn’t have thought that.” You don’t want to have that kind of faith. It’s like a paper airplane. It’s gone!

So we’re looking to go from faith to the highest level, because it’s at the highest level that goes to the kingdom. When I say the highest level, it’s because there are elements of faith that are incomplete. The Bible is full of it. But we’re not here to talk about how to get saved. We’re here to talk about as Christians, how do we go strong so that we invest together? What do we want to invest in? We want to invest in our faith. Look at this definition. There’s our word right there.

**Hebrews 11:1** Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for,

Faith first is assurance. That’s what you want. Faith is walking and acting on that assurance of things hoped for. This means I need to have a hope that is clear in my mind. It’s objective. I can see it and I can verify it and I know it and I’m going to think about it and I’m going to pray about it and it’s there and it’s consuming me. So therefore, my faith is walking toward that hope. We have to get there! It’s the assurance of things hoped for. But notice here what else we have. Look at the very next word. It is

**Hebrews 11:1** … the conviction of things not seen.

Conviction is the difference between let’s go protest something and put it on a sign and let’s go to war. Those are two different things. Christians are about going to war. I was reading Tozer on the airplane coming out here. He said, “You need to be getting after the devil.” He talked about a guy at his church that says, “Have you kicked the devil today?” We’re at war! We’re at war not with people, but with demonic ideas coming from Satan himself.

It’s the conviction of things not seen. This is the only time the word conviction here is used in the New Testament in Greek. It means to demonstrate something in full. You’re demonstrating things not seen. That’s faith. So really, what we want to do is we want to go from belief where I acknowledge something, I understand something is true, and I go to faith. Faith is where we can go to Hebrews 11. If you read the chapter, you have all these guys. Nineteen times it says by faith somebody did something. By faith, by faith, by faith, people did amazing things. They left what was comfortable. They left what was expected. They left what they planned, to do what God told them, because of a hope that they had.

So there is belief initially, but we know from the Bible, James tells us the demons believe in God. We know that. They believe in God and some of your versions say they tremble. Some of your versions say they shudder. The original root Greek word for that is fridge. They refrigerate, literally. They say, “I believe there is a God. Don’t tell me there is no God. That’s ridiculous! We understand that. But we don’t want that belief. Faith is fine. It’s like the paper clip. I understand. I’m going to move toward it.” I’m not saying you’re not saved. I’m saying, what does an active, strong faith tell me? It tells me how I walk, not whether God has saved me or not. We’ll find that out. What you want to do is move those two points as close together as possible. God has saved me and I’m verifying it with my life. I say, you know what? Don’t talk to me about that. That’s our goal. It’s not the points being further apart, because then you get, “Really?” We want to go from there to conviction. Faith is the conviction of things not seen. That’s our goal.

So given that all these men and women in Hebrews 11 are examples for us, how do we grow this faith into something that will be bolted into God to get the maximum power of God in our life for our joy?

**1. Stand on the shoulders of others.**

We just explained that from Hebrews 11. I’m standing on the shoulders of parents who raised me, both of them just to the end. My dad died in 1998 and I remember my brother said, “Dad, when you die, they’re going to screw you into the ground,” because he was just filled with the Spirit. I saw him as a child. The doorbell rings in Arizona. He opens the door and there was one of those Hare Krishna guys with the robe and bald head. My dad stood there for thirty minutes, sharing the Gospel. He spent thirty minutes out there! I was like, “What is he doing? Who is that guy? That is weird.” Things don’t leave your mind, right? It just comes up (snaps fingers) just like that. The first service didn’t get that. You guys got that because it just came up, because I’m standing on the shoulders of others. I’m standing on the shoulders of a mother who prayed for me during my high school and varsity years, where I was the prodigal son. She was in the Scriptures until the day of her death. Not to mention all the guys you read and you read about and they preached and then they were burned at the stake and then the martyrs and then Acts and all of that. Do you know what? You’re not alone! When you want to have strong faith, you’re not alone. You’re here! This is us. We’re communal, a family. Pick up the phone. You’re not alone! I believe the same thing. There is no greater encouragement when you’re all by yourself.

I’ll tell you one. I was here and I worked at a company that is long since gone, but we were over there by Morton. I’m leaving now. We’re building this building and I’m going to be leaving and I’m the only guy in the building, in the company, that is a believer. I’m going off to Seminary and I’m trying to tell them I’m quitting. I’m standing there so dejected because everybody is like, “Dave, you’re going to go out and be a priest, right?” No. They were not getting it. You feel like, I’m the only guy who believes this. Am I walking on thin ice, here? Then all of a sudden, I heard this voice next to me. “So, I hear you’re going to Seminary?” Who is this guy? It was a guy with a camera buried to his face. He’s from the newspaper and he’s taking pictures. Yes, I’m going to Seminary. “Well, where is it?” It’s out in California. Grace Community Church, a guy named John MacArthur. I don’t know if you’ve heard of him. “Oh yes. John MacArthur, Grace to You. I listen to him all the time.” Really? “Oh, yeah.” There were one or two other encouraging comments and I thought, Whoa! I turn around and look and he is gone. That guy was clued up. There was a guy. I’m not alone. This thing is real. You stand on the shoulders of others. Now, where do I get that?

***1*** *Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses,*

That’s the first point. That’s the first cause. Therefore, since we’re not alone. That word witnesses in Greek is martyr, just so you know. It’s not like, “Oh, I see something.” No, it’s people who had conviction are surrounding you, alive and dead.

*let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,*

There are two things going on here with these witnesses. Let us lay aside and let’s run. Run is let’s live our life. But let’s lay aside every encumbrance that so easily entangles us. Here’s what I want to point out to you. This says fight your sin and ignore your sin. If you try to fight sin, it’s not going to happen. I’m sorry. Sin is the second greatest powerful force in the universe. I know you’re good. Outside of the Gospel, sin is the greatest power because the Gospel has the power to carve through sin like a hot knife through butter. If you doubt that, read Romans 1:16-17. The reason God had Paul put it there is because the very next verses talk about how the wrath of God is now unleashed against all who suppress the truth in unrighteousness and God gives them over to homosexuality three times in a way. He says, “Do you know what? The power of the Gospel carves right through that.” That’s why he put it there. It’s not to say there is no hope. I’m not ashamed of the Gospel, but without it, there is no way. There is no hope you have of fighting sin. But how a Christian can fight sin is what we’re going to get to.

Here is what I want to tell you you’re battling. You have this cloud of witnesses. That’s great, but it’s not going to help you with this problem. The problem is that right there. It’s sin that so easily entangles you. It easily entangles. When I say throw away sin, you start with big ones that you don’t do. “Of course, I don’t do those things.” Yes, we all know that. Let’s talk about the ones that easily have you, easily take you, easily confuse you, easily have your eyes off Christ, easily say, “Yes, I can be in neutral. I love Christ and I can do something that isn’t sin and it isn’t loving Christ. I can do that.” You begin that lie. What easily entangles you?

Sin’s desire is to get your eyes off Christ. “Hey, what are you looking at? Look right here. Stop, stop stop!” Sin is a faith killer because when sin comes, what happens? You’re like Peter and Christ looks at you and you’re like, “I’m done! I’m done for life.” Sin is a faith killer. It immediately says, “You think I’ll accept you, now? Really? Have you ever heard about God’s holiness?” It so easily entangles you. That’s what you need to be looking for. I’m going to point out what I think a big one is. But this is what he says.

He says we have so great a cloud of witnesses. Let’s do these things. Well, how am I going to make that happen? How can I grow to this next level from a paper clip on up? Well, we don’t just stand on the shoulders of others. We

**2. Look over the shoulder of Jesus.**

***2*** *looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith,*

Got it! There is no other plan for salvation, nothing else to give you confidence, nothing else that would say God will accept you. It’s Christ. We’ve got it, absolutely! That’s looking at Him, not really looking over His shoulder. You might be saying, “Why do you want to look over His shoulder? I thought we want to look at Christ?” You do. Absolutely! I’m looking at Him for my acceptance to God. I’m looking at Him. He does everything. I got it! But there is something else here. That’s what I want to show you, because actually, we’re talking about investing.

*who for the joy that was set before him*

This Jesus had joy set before Him. Do you know what it did? This joy set before Him allowed Him to endure the cross and despise the shame and not complain. He

*endured the cross,*

That means not just the Roman cross of being up there and suffering the physical pain, but it’s three hours on the cross with His Father looking at Him and saying, “You are sin! You disgust me!” He turned His back on His Son that He loved. He knew that was going to happen and He endured that, knowing it was going to happen. This was the one that the Father loved! Why did He endure that? Because there was joy set before Him, that’s why.

Now, I lead you to that to say He was able to do this because of the joy. So hopefully you have a question. I hope you didn’t just run past this and go on to the next thing because there is a question. Pastor, please answer that. It’s four words. What is the joy? You want to know what that is. Or is it just going to be some theological kind of, “Oh, you just believe it’s good”? There is a joy here that is tangible, that you can feel. God doesn’t want to give you something you just think about and maybe it’s better in the future. He wants to give you something you can feel. Christ had that right there; the joy set before Him. I’m going to get there, but first, understand what he says. When you look over the shoulder of Jesus that means you have to consider, meditate, think.

***3*** *Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself,*

He endured all this by people. Why?

*so that*

That’s purpose. The purpose of what? The purpose of considering, so that, what?

*you may not grow weary or fainthearted.*

There it is. Does anybody feel tired this morning? Just to share with you as a great blessing, just a missions moment, here. I feel so blessed because after twenty years, this church has invested in missions and invested in us. Since then, you’ve had I think four of our African brothers that I’ve trained, come here and preach from this pulpit. Now, to think that back in 1997, 1995, not you’re going to have African missionaries preach here, but you’re going to have Africans come here and you know them. Talk about connection! You’re connected. I have African brothers I’d put anywhere.

Our church suffered covid just like everybody else. One thing I’ve seen since we’ve come through this and we came through it very well, united and together, masked and unmasked alike and all together with it. We were locked down more difficult than people in America to start with. But a lot of people coming into our church had a common saying. “I’m just tired. As soon as I came here, the first Sunday, this is my church.” Black, white, it doesn’t matter. “This is the place I’m looking for. I don’t even understand that guy speaking American up there.” Why? “I’m so tired because it’s all been working hard, trying to give you all kinds of pizzazz charismatic things about whiz bang stuff. No, this is just the truth right here and I don’t have to be tired.”

*so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.*

Is anybody tired today of the trials you’ve gone through; medical, relational, social, financial? You just don’t feel like reading your Bible. You can’t pray. “I’m tired and I can’t deal with the kids. I’ve already lost them. They don’t obey me anymore. I don’t know what to do.” Consider Him so that you won’t grow weary and lose heart.

What is it about Him I have to consider? He’s the author and perfecter of my faith, but what else? What else in that joy set before him? Well, drop down to verse 10. After talking about discipline, we look at that and we think He is disciplining us. No, discipline is the word for learner, because of where you get disciple. So He is teaching. So when you consider Jesus, guess what? God is now your tutor, your personal tutor, personal trainer. “I’m here to help you.” That’s what these verses are talking about. Then he says the earthly fathers

***10*** *For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them,*

Fathers do their best job. It’s sometimes not making the wisest choices.

*but he disciplines us for our good,*

Why? Why does He discipline us for our good? Well, there is a purpose right here. It’s so

*that we may share his holiness.*

You might be thinking, “I was looking for something big and now you just told me it’s so I can obey more. I thought it was going to be a good sermon.” Obedience is one half the side of the coin, for sure. There is obeying. Holiness is sanctification. It’s set apart from sin. Is God set apart from sin? Yes. Is Jesus set apart from sin? Yes. So we’re supposed to be set apart from sin. That’s going to be tough because sin is the second greatest power in the universe. How can I pull apart from that? That’s going to be tough.

The other half of the coin is this. God is holy and Jesus is holy. Have they been holy since forever? Yes. Were they holy before the creation of the world? Yes. If they were holy before the creation of the world, what were they set apart from? Nothing is created. There is no common thing there. There is nothing to be upset about. But they’re holy. What do they spend their time doing? Father and Son locking eyes, devoted to each other in uncommon love, the power of the Holy Spirit manifesting between both, burning between both, saying, “I am content being right here in my Father’s arms and He’s right here, my Son loves. We’re doing that.”

Then He said, “Do you know what? There is a greater plan here, Son. I’m going to create the earth, unfolding sinners that you’re going to redeem, that I give you. When I give them to you, your blood will be so worthy, so honorable to have paid for them, they will become children of God, adopted into my family, your brothers. You will now have an army of billions of people who are your offspring, Isaiah 53, and I’ve got that for you so that all of it then reflects like mirrors to me, glorifying your Father. So you’re giving me the greatest glory you could ever give me. How would you like that, Son?” For the joy set before Him, a kingdom of people, He has family that has the power and the heart of God flowing through them to Him. So it’s like, “I love you now. How would you like to have that times a billion?” You see, it’s not about obedience, is it? It’s about that devotion. Let me give you an illustration.

I did a wedding a while back of a guy who lived with us whose name is Junior. You get to that part in a wedding after the sermon. Everybody wants it. Everybody looks for it. “You may now kiss the bride.” The veil comes up. It’s the most dangerous place for a pastor to be. You do not want to be there. “You may now kiss your bride.” You guys are far. You’re fine. You’re four meters distance and everything is fine. The pastor is right in there. “How are y’all doing?” (Laughter!) No, you don’t belong there. It will burn you up. The eyes that would turn and look, what do you think that would be? That would be like the angels in Isaiah 6. They’re devoted to each other. That’s highly holy devotion, which means love that is uncompared, multiplied with all of its benefits and gifts because He is greater. That’s what Jesus is looking at. “Going through this is going to be better than when it was just the Father and me before the creation of the world.” It’s better! “Put me on the cross.”

The author of Hebrews is saying look unto Jesus. Consider Him because Romans 8 says that’s what you get. What do you mean that’s what we get? Well, Jesus prayed it. Last I checked, God answers every single one of Jesus’ prayers.

**John 17:20** “I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word,

That is us.

**John 17:21** that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us,

When you’re born again, the down payment is the Holy Spirit. The full payment is the Trinity. We’re part of that, being children of God in the family. We went from enemies to children. We went from enemies to family. You move from the kids table at Thanksgiving to the adult table. We’re not down there saying, “Look at those guys. The Trinity is amazing!” No, God says “Come here.” In 2 Samuel 9 David told Mephibosheth, “You will eat at my table continually.” This earth is temporal and your problems are temporal. Your opportunities are temporal. This is what’s coming. If this is what’s coming, I will just keep my eye focused and go on to that. That’s the joy set before Him that He is saying, “Come up here and look.”

I have four kids; three brothers and a sister. The oldest, they follow. Everybody wanted to be like Josh. In Phoenix, he climbed a mountain and they call it “Josh’s mountain.” He was up there looking and they said, “What do you see?” He said, “Right over there. Come here. Follow my hand right there (pointing to a particular spot). Look right there! Do you see it?” They would say, “Whoa! That is so cool! Josh, you are so cool!” What’s Jesus saying? He’s saying, “Come here. I want you to see something.”

**Hebrews 2:11** For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers,

Have you ever stopped to think that the Bible tells us that Jesus is our brother? He is fully man. He is in every way, God, and also in every way, man. We are brothers and sisters of Him, adopted into God’s family. He’s saying, “Come. Step up here and let me show you what I’m looking at.” Now if you want to have faith that really emboldens, do you want to see what Jesus actually sees? That will curl your hair! That’s joy. We’re talking about sand castles here on the earth. Why do you want more cars, more houses, more this, more that? That stuff goes away. How about the one who makes the earth and then He is such related to you, it’s like, what else do you want?

Being a Christian and having God and having faith is so great. It’s like the little kid that comes in and you say, “Okay. I’m going to drive the car, but here, you get to push the buttons.” The kid would say, “I can’t believe this! My dad is the most amazing thing ever!” “Come here. Let me help you do it. Sit here.” I remember driving in the bush with a guy. We’re in the bush. You’ve got lions. You’ve got elephants and all that. I’m surrounded by fifty elephants coming at the thing. It’s just like, Wow! Here’s a guy and he takes his six year old kid and says, “Sit right here. This is where the gear shift is.” He was teaching him how to drive. He’s not joking and being a big brother. He’s not doing that. He’s like, “You get to drive,” but he is in control. Do you think that kid wants to do anything else? Would he say, “Could you get me some Lego’s?” That is what is in store.

**3. Worship shoulder to shoulder with one another.**

I’m told I get a little leeway here in the second service. I got excited! I’m sorry. I’m seeing the clock wind down.

Worship shoulder to shoulder with one another. Where do we get that? Well, when you get toward the end of the chapter, he gives us an illustration of Mount Sinai and an illustration of Mount Zion. Sinai is law and Zion is grace. Don’t live according to the Old Testament Jewish sacrifices. Live under the new covenant with Christ. He’s saying, “You don’t have to please me by your sacrifices anymore.” Then he starts in verse 25,

***25*** *See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven.*

Don’t refuse God who is speaking. He’s talking about the people who received the Ten Commandments and what did they immediately do? They said, “Let’s go make a golden calf. Because we can’t wait for Moses, let’s make a golden calf.” Don’t refuse God who is speaking. What are you refusing? Do you know what their penalty was? It’s not because they didn’t obey. I mean in terms of like, “You didn’t do this. You didn’t drink enough of that. You didn’t eat enough of that. You didn’t do this. You had too many women,” all that kind of stuff. That’s not what the issue was. Why were they severely punished for forty years? God said, “There it is. There’s the land. There is the Promised Land. There is everything I’m going to give you. It’s stuff you can’t imagine.” And they said, “We don’t want to go. We like it better, here.” That’s why He said, “Forty years and you’re all going to die. Let’s try your kids. Maybe they’ll obey. I just want somebody who wants to have what I’m giving them.” That’s what He is saying here in verse 25.

***26*** *At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, “Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.”*

What in the world does that verse say? Well, what helps us is to know that He is quoting Haggai 2:6. You might say, “Really? In the last point of the sermon you’re going to take me to Haggai?” Yes. He says, “I did tell you that I shook the earth, but now I’m going to shake the earth and the heavens.” He’s quoting Haggai.

Now what is Haggai about? Haggai was about when they left Babylon and now they’re coming to Jerusalem. They’re coming to Israel. They’re coming to the land again and they start building under Ezra. They’re building. “We’re going to build the Temple, build the foundation. It’s going to be great!” Well, about ten or twelve years later, Cyrus dies, his kid dies, another king comes and he doesn’t like the Jews. So one letter from the enemy says stop building and he just does a cursory look through the archives and says, “You’re right. You are a rebellious people. Stop building under force of arms.” So they stopped building. So they’re sitting around. God sent Haggai and Zechariah, which I understand you guys have just been through. He sent those two prophets and he said, “What are you doing sitting around in your paneled houses while the house of the Lord stands idle?”

I hate to draw a parallel here of the last two years of God shaking and God’s people are saying, “I don’t need to be with God’s people. I like online. I like livestream. I like all this. Let’s rearrange church. It’s all tech.” Fine! Do you know what happens when you go tech? Pretty soon, they’re listening to the top five conference speakers and not listening to the church. “Let’s go hear the top music people.” But nobody can fellowship online, can they? Nobody can worship together online. Nobody can give a word of encouragement. Nobody can lift up a bruised reed online. It’s amazing what’s happening here. We’re not alone.

This was Haggai. “What are you doing? Get going!” So the people heard the prophet. They were stimulated. The Lord spoke to their hearts and they started building. Here come the enemies. But this time, they write a letter. They go to the archives. There is a new king. Darius checks and says, “Yes, you’re right. Cyrus the Great did tell them they’re supposed to build. They’re not done, yet. Oh by the way, you’re right. Thank you for pointing me to the archives. They’re supposed to build. They’ll do it. You pay for it with your taxes. Anybody getting in their way, I’m going to stick a wooden pole through you. Any questions?” You see, we don’t know that God knows the future. He knows what is next. He knows what strings get pulled. He knows what is going to happen. We don’t, and we panic because we can’t build. What’s He saying? I’m shaking the earth and I’m going to shake it now even more. Don’t refuse. He tells us

***27*** *This phrase, “Yet once more,” indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain.*

He is shaking so that, that which remains, remains. It’s kind of like healthy and we want to be ones who remain. That’s conviction. How do you do it?

***28*** *Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken,*

That’s where your attention is. What kingdom do you have that’s coming? It’s not what is falling away through your hands right now. Your eyes are on the wrong thing. Your eyes are on retirement. Your eyes are on what’s going to happen with the stock market. Your eyes are on what’s going to happen with the economy. Are we going to go to war with Ukraine? I had a guy that I worked with. I’ve got all the Seminaries and things in Africa and he’s got all the things in the Slavic countries. He’s based in Kiev, Ukraine. A couple weeks ago, we were talking and he said, “I’m going to leave here in the States and I’m going to go back to Ukraine. I just hope there is an airport I can land into, but I’m going.” It’s not his kingdom. He doesn’t care. There is a kingdom that can’t be shaken and it may be this close. What do we do when we have that as our focus?

*and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe,*

Right there in your ESV it says worship. You see, when you’re worshiping, it’s pretty tough to sin. When you’re worshiping, you’re doing what’s right. You’re doing what’s next.

The guy in John 9 who was blind, Jesus put mud on the eyes and told him to go wash. The Pharisees kept asking him like for the fourth time, “Are you that guy?” He’s like, “It sounds like you really want to join His church.” They put him out of the synagogue just because he’s saying, “I was blind and now I see. That’s all I know.” The Pharisees were going crazy attacking.

**John 9:35-38** Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” He answered, “And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?” Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you.” He said, “Lord, I believe,” and he worshiped him.

What follows convictional belief? If it’s not worship, go back to Go. Collect your $200 and let’s try it again. Worship follows convictional belief. What is the sin that so easily entangles us? It’s the same sin that easily entangles Israel. In Jeremiah 22:21, once I read this I thought I have to remember that forever.

**Jeremiah 22:21** I spoke to you in your prosperity, but you said ‘I will not listen.’

Prosperity goes to invest on this earth. It’s generally for me and mine. That’s why it’s difficult to hear about things that you can’t see, but you’re hoping. So we want to think about a kingdom that can’t be shaken. What is investing, then? Investing is what you do when you say, “I can’t pull my kid out of school and go over here.” Why? “Because he has seven or eight years or whatever.” You’re invested. “I can’t make a decision to move.” Why? “Because I’m invested.” It happens in your life every day. “I’m not going to switch now. I can’t switch insurance companies. I’m invested.” It’s the same principle. We don’t just jump so quick when we think about the kingdom we’re in, do we? How our kids are, where we live. “I don’t want to sell my home and leave. I’m invested.” What does worship give you? Investment. When you’re invested, when there are problems in the church, you don’t skedaddle for something else that makes you feel good because you’re not invested. If you’re not invested, you have a paper clip.

I understand there are times when you realize your church is not a church anymore and then you’re going to go find a church. But I will say this. Our family, when we go on holiday, we go somewhere and go to the beach, every Sunday, we find someplace to go because we’re invested in the kingdom. There is going to be a church somewhere. I’m going to listen to somebody preach and it’s going to be great! We’re going to do that. I don’t care who it is. We’re going to find it because we’re invested. Are you invested to that level? Because it yields great fruit as you’ve seen from having African preachers here. I’ll tell you where investment comes.

Just before we left to go to Africa in 2002, I graduated from Seminary and we came back here to Peoria. I was getting ordained and I met a church member here. I remember him from being here. He had left and gone on. But he said, “Dave, I remember you. You were kind of a funny guy.” He didn’t mean funny like I was funny, funny, but I was just strange. (Laughter!) He said, “You asked all kinds of strange questions.” I wasn’t a believer, but I was asking all kinds of unbelieving questions. It’s like asking your four year old about calculus. He said, “Dave, I just want you to know it’s interesting seeing how this all worked out because our Sunday School group prayed for you by name for a year, from 1997-1998. What happened in Bethany in 1998? We were the guys on the board who were asking the neighbor lady, ‘anything with the neighbors?’ ‘No, they won’t talk to me.’ Okay. Moving on to other requests, what about the guy with the knee? What about whatever?” Our name just started slowly going down toward the bottom on the board because there was no response.

Then one day, the Spirit moves. It was God’s timing and God’s plan. This church invested. You invested because this is a church that worships. You invested in time and in talent and in treasure. That’s what He calls us to because see, we shouldn’t have any treasure. He has us invest it so it multiplies. Don’t bury it in the ground like the guy with the talents. This church in us has invested these three things and just some of the initial fruit are guys who have just preached here in the last year from Africa. I’m here to tell you there is more going on in Africa now throughout the continent that is happening. There is a season right now that is flourishing. I’ll just tell you that because of your investment, our Seminary, we’re not known to be scholars. What we’re known for is preachers.

Just one small little story. There was a student who is now coming in their first year and we said, “How did you come to know us?” He said, “Well, I was with a buddy of mine who was studying at some other Seminary, a Baptist Seminary, and I was talking to him about wanting to get into ministry. The natural thinking was, “Well, let me talk to the Administration and we’ll see if we can get you in.” But the guy who was already at the Seminary said, “I was at this conference a couple weeks ago and there was a guy there and man! That guy could preach!” He said, “Really? Well, what’s his name?” He said, “I don’t know.” “Well, where is he from?” “Some place called Christ Seminary up there in Polokwane.” He said, “That guy could preach!” That’s what we have. We have graduate students who are bearing up under the load in townships, laboring but preaching and people hear it and say, “How do I do that?” It’s as a result of your time, your treasure and your talent. We hope to give some of that time, treasure and talent back to this body because that’s what it’s about. You are doing that.

You might say, “That’s great! We’re done!” No, I think the Lord is saying we’re just getting started because He is shaking the earth to see who is staying and saying, what can we do? All investment, all giving, everything starts with worship. When there is worship, then there is “What do I do, Lord?” Then there is Zacchaeus. “I’ll give half my possessions away first and then if I’ve defrauded anybody, four times I’ll pay.” You know, if he was clever, he would have said, I’ll pay back four times after he would have given everybody what he cheated. But he didn’t. He said, “Let me pay half first. Now, four times to anybody.” That’s worship. That’s somebody saying, “Whoa! I just got changed.” He has a gold cable plugged right into God. That is really all in investing together so that we remain when God shakes.

When God converts people, look at David. What’s the next thing he faces? Goliath. Jesus comes to get baptized. What’s the next thing? Satan. When God creates something, the next thing He says is “Let’s test the product.” In my days, in electronics, it was called burn in. Let’s just cook this baby and see what happens. One slingshot and done! Jesus, let’s make sure He is depleted. Forty days with no food and no water. Satan, done!

It’s no surprise that God shakes. We want to be ones who shake with it and say now, what’s God going to do? Because He is going to use the weakest to do what? To wipe out the strongest. That’s what he does. It’s investing that keeps you in the game. So watch out for the sin that easily entangles, that sparkles, entices, because it robs you of your ability to see Jesus clearly and what He is looking at. That’s the key. Whatever He is looking at is for you, too.