

May we all experience the benefits of 'faith-filled' giving—not just *faithful* giving!
Love and blessings!

Pastor Heard

Part 27: Feel the Passion!

Texts:

Ecclesiastes 9:7 (The Message) - "Seize life!"

Another way to phrase this is to simply say, "Make the most of your life!"
How do you do that?

Hebrews 4:14-16 (KJV) - "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. [15] For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. [16] Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

Psalms 138:2 (NKJV) - "I will worship toward Your holy temple, And praise Your name For Your lovingkindness and Your truth; For You have magnified Your word above all Your name."

Incredible Keys to Incredible Breakthroughs!

Part 3 - The Key of Honor

A. We have been speaking about honoring the people, institutions, and principles God has placed in our lives so that we can receive the full benefits of what He wants to give us.

1. What we should honor: vital relationships, ministry gifts, and those who serve us—but especially God, His House and His Word. These vital contributions are special gifts to help us fulfill our destiny.
2. The benefit we receive from all that God has placed in our lives is directly determined by the honor or value we give to them.
3. Jesus said in Matthew chapter 10, if we receive a prophet as a prophet, we will receive a prophet's reward. However, if we receive a prophet as a righteous man, we only receive a righteous man's reward.

B. Unfortunately, in today's world most Christians do not highly regard or take God's Word as seriously as they should. Like Boudreaux's boss, they fail to take Him as seriously as they should.

1. **Joke: Boudreaux's Popularity**

Boudreaux's boss underestimated and thought of him as just another Cajun from Louisiana. In fact, his boss was growing weary from hearing so many people say that Boudreaux knew "everybody" in the world.

"Okay, Boudreaux," his boss said one day, "prove to me that you know everybody in the world. Do you know Tom Cruise?"

"Oh, me and Tom go way back," said Boudreaux.

So the boss bought airline tickets to Hollywood and soon they were knocking on Tom Cruise's door. The moment the butler opened the door, he grinned and said, "Welcome, Mr. Boudreaux," and they were immediately invited inside. Tom rushed out to greet Boudreaux like a best friend and invited him and his boss to stay for lunch.

"Well, I'm impressed," said the boss when they left. "But I bet you don't know President Obama."

"Aw, sure I do," said Boudreaux. And off they went to Washington. When they reached the White House, the guards smiled and said, "Good to see you, Boudreaux," and escorted the two men into the Oval Office.

"Hi ya, Boudreaux!" said the President with a warm embrace. After a nice visit and lunch with the President, they left. The boss was suitably impressed, but not yet ready to give up.

"Okay, Boudreaux, I'm going to see if you know the ultimate celebrity—the Pope!"

"Why, for sure I do!" said Boudreaux. "We go way back." And soon they were on an airplane to Vatican City. As they approached St. Peter's Square, they were surrounded by thousands of visitors. Boudreaux said, "Heck, I can't see nothin' from here," and walked right up to the Swiss Guards. They all smiled warmly and said, "Boudreaux, it's good to see you!" Opening the doors to the Vatican, he was welcomed inside.

His boss was amazed! As he waited outside in the Square, the door to the upstairs balcony opened, and out came the Pope and Boudreaux. They both smiled and waved at the crowd, with arms wrapped around each other.

In a few moments, Boudreaux excused himself and returned to the Square to find his boss. But when he arrived, his boss was being loaded into the back of an ambulance. Rushing to his side, Boudreaux asked, "What happened, Boss?"

His reply was, "I was doing fine until you came out on the balcony and the man next to me says, 'Who's that guy in the balcony with the funny hat on, standing next to Boudreaux?'"

Like Boudreaux's boss, even believers can underestimate the power of God's Word!

2. **Psalm 119:126-128 (NKJV)** - "It is time for You to act, O Lord, For they have regarded Your law as void. Therefore I love Your commandments More than gold, yes, than fine gold! Therefore all Your precepts concerning all things I consider to be right; I hate every false way."

3. The psalmist had such high esteem for God's Word, he valued it more than the purest gold. Emphatically, he declared that its teaching on any subject was always right and any system seeking to replace God's principles is false.
4. Of course, to experience the full benefits and promises of God Word, we must honor and hold it in such high esteem, we will gladly believe and practice its teachings.
5. I love how the psalmist demands that it's time for God to act because "they" have declared His Word to be void.
 - a. The word "void" means: to cast off, disannul, or make of none effect. The fact that His Word is being disregarded prompts God to act.
 - b. The referral to "they" is society at large, which could be: leaders, God's own people, government officials, or other groups. By casting off the Word of the Lord, *they* drew God's attention, which thrust Him into action!
6. In this context, for God to 'act' would mean that He will prove, or even vindicate what He has spoken. This could be done in one of two ways:
 - a. When people who have been warned, choose to ignore and select a path that shows Him no honor, God can prove His Word by allowing it to happen.
 - b. Another method of vindicating His Word and proving that His promises are true and faithful (which I really love about this psalm) is to bless those who highly esteem His Word and its principles.
 - c. It's as if the psalmist is saying, "They have disregarded your Word, Lord. But You show its truthfulness by using undeniable ways to bless those who honor and confess that God keeps His promises!"
7. Since many scholars believe that Ezra wrote this psalm, the writer would have first-hand knowledge about God honoring those who honor him.

- a. Ezra was a contemporary of Nehemiah's. While Jerusalem and most of the Jewish nation had gone into captivity for failing to honor God's Word, these men continued to show Him honor.
- b. By believing God's promises, they witnessed a pagan king: underwriting the cost of rebuilding Jerusalem, the city of God; fund the reconstruction of the Temple, as God's Word had promised; and allowing captive Jews to return to their homeland.

C. Why should we honor God's Word?

1. It should be honored, because He certainly does! As powerful as the name of Jesus is, our Lord declares that He honors His Word **above** His name!
 - a. **Psalm 138:2 (NKJV)** - "I will worship toward Your holy temple, And praise Your name For Your lovingkindness and Your truth; For You have magnified Your word above all Your name."
2. What an astounding declaration! Why would God magnify (elevate, enlarge or esteem) His Word higher than His name? Because the worth of a person's name (their identity, character and integrity) is determined by whether or not they keep their word.
 - a. **Psalm 8:1 (NKJV)** - "O Lord, our Lord, How excellent is Your name in all the earth, Who have set Your glory above the heavens!"
 - b. God's name is excellent and without blemish. When applying for a job, most companies require a background check. You can perform every background check imaginable on our Lord, but you'll always find His name to be excellent!
 - c. Since His name is holy and unblemished, He will keep and fulfill the promises of His Word—every time!
 - d. I use the words "every time," because if God failed to keep His Word even **once**, He would be unfaithful and His promises unreliable.

3. **Isaiah 55:11 (NKJV)** - "So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it."
4. Since everything God does is in harmony with His Word, His actions will always be in alignment with what He has spoken. If He said it, you can be sure it will happen!
 - a. **Psalm 33:4 (NKJV)** - "For the word of the Lord is right, And all His work is done in truth."
 - b. These verses confirm that if we apply what God has spoken, what He said will come to pass.

D. By honoring God's Word, every promise will be fulfilled in every area of our lives.

1. If you want to be blessed, read about the lady who moved God by honoring His Word with her EXTRAORDINARY OFFERING! This was not just faithful giving, it was "faith-filled" giving.
 - a. **Mark 12:42-44 (NKJV)** - "Then one poor widow came and threw in two mites, which make a quadrans. [43] So He called His disciples to Himself and said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury; [44] for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood."
2. The fact that Jesus **watched** what people gave may be offensive to some.
3. **Joke:** At Sunday dinner, a young boy listened to his dad talk about the church service. He complained about the speaker system, the loud music, the long sermon, the unfriendly people, and the offering. Finally the boy spoke up and said, "Gee, Dad, for the dollar you gave in the offering, I thought it was a pretty good show!"

4. In the widow's story, notice that Jesus not only *watched* what people were giving, He also knew what they could *afford* to give. And He still does! He clearly stated that the widow was poor.
5. While the little widow didn't have as much monetarily as the others, it touched the heart of God when she gave her ALL--everything she had.

E. What was Jesus' purpose for telling this story?

1. God does not expect you to give away everything you have, as some preachers would have you believe. The purpose of this story was about trusting God.
2. Why didn't Jesus end the story with the widow being blessed and rewarded?
 - a. That would not have been the perfect ending, since the issue was about faith.
 - b. Because the woman believed and then acted upon God's promises, she would undoubtedly be blessed. God would be a liar if He did not bless her obedience. The point is, He wants us to believe Him and then act in faith as the widow did.
 - c. **Luke 6:38 (NKJV)** - "Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you."
3. It's certainly possible that the little widow lady had heard Jesus' teaching. Unlike others, she believed what He said and then acted upon His promise. Her gift was not an act of charity or of hopelessness; it was an act of faith.
 - a. What was the result? Was she blessed? To suggest anything else would accuse God of perjury, indict the Almighty for prevarication, and challenge His integrity.

- b. This scripture is so meaningful today because most believers apparently do not believe God can be trusted. But the little widow did!
 - c. **2 Corinthians 9:6-8 (NKJV)** - "But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. [7] So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. [8] And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work."
 - 4. Was she blessed? Of course she was! And God wants each of us to demonstrate that same simple faith in His Word by obediently trusting that if He said it, He will fulfill it!
 - 5. Ordinary measures in ordinary times will produce ordinary results. Extraordinary measures at **any** time will produce extraordinary results. However, when extraordinary measures are taken during extraordinary times, the results will always be the very best possible!
- F. The real secret to the widow woman's breakthrough was that she didn't just honor God with faithful giving; she honored God's Word with **faith-filled** giving.
- 1. Yes, she needed the money—but she gave it anyway. Why? She decided to put her trust in God more than the economy, the government, a job, or even her own ability to earn and prosper.
 - 2. Notice the distinction between 'faithful' and 'faith-filled' giving:
 - a. Faithful giving is to give faithfully in obedience to God's commands. For the widow, faithful giving would have been 10 percent of her two mites.
 - b. Faith-filled giving is not only obedient giving, but giving with the expectation of God doing something in return for your act of faith.
 - 3. Her giving was not for charity. I believe she gave, **expecting** to receive.

4. This little lady's gift also proves that God honors *equal sacrifice* rather than equal giving.
 - a. What does that mean? While her gift was not nearly as large as others, Jesus said she had given more—because she gave her all.
 - b. Why does God honor equal sacrifice? Because sacrifice is birthed from a heart of faith! Paul tells us that Abraham “believed God” and offered Isaac as a sacrifice.
 - c. Equal sacrifice is a demonstration of equal faith.

G. So what happened to the little widow who gave her all?

1. Some believe the story ended there, but I do not. While we don't know the specific details, one thing is certain: if we believe God's Word, she was blessed **because** she gave—and in direct proportion to **what** she gave.
2. I have watched those who did the same as the widow lady, and what God did for them in return for honoring His Word.
3. Jeff's story.
4. My friend, Stan Harrell, has always faithfully tithed, but his wife paid the bills. One day, she pointed out that it would be absolutely impossible to tithe that week. Do you know what Stan did? He asked for the checkbook and wrote out a check for twice the amount of their normal tithe. Did he survive? Oh yes! He has begun at least three businesses that have grown so large, he could sell them for huge sums of money. By choosing to honor God, he was financially set for life!
5. Stan's brother, Phil, one of my best friends, related a similar experience. A guest minister felt impressed to receive an offering for the pastor rather than for himself, and announced that he was giving everything in his pocket—without knowing how much that would be. God spoke to Phil to do the same thing. The only difference was that Phil had just made a substantial withdrawal at the bank and knew how much

was in his pocket. But he also had a ten dollar bill. Instead of listening to God and giving it all, he reasoned that he couldn't afford to do that. Since he had recently bid on two substantial jobs and it was long past the deadline for the bids to be awarded, he assumed both had been given to another contractor. So he chose to give the ten dollars.

However, the Holy Spirit wouldn't allow him to rest. The next day, he told his wife how he had missed God. She replied, "Then you need to make it right and do what God said!" Without waiting until the next service, he went to the church the same day and gave the amount that was in his pocket on Sunday. The next morning, he received a phone call telling him that he had been awarded BOTH contracts!

His statement was that his earnings were twice as much as the entire previous year—in the first five months!

6. Recently, I met a precious couple who have begun a great ministry in Latin America. They had been members at C.T. for a year before taking a staff position at another church. While at our church, God spoke to the husband about giving 15 percent rather than 10 percent tithe. The wife told me about her angry complaints; but in just a week, it became so clear that this was a word from God, she surrendered and agreed to obey Him. Now they are very close to an enormous financial breakthrough that will help them launch their ministry! Without even knowing, they had been investing in their own future!

H. **Life Application Points:**

1. How do we begin to be faith-filled givers and experience a supernatural overflow in our lives? Just S.T.A.R.T.
2. **S - Stop making excuses:** Acknowledge that until you obey God, your disobedience will withhold His blessings. Furthermore, you have allowed the devourer to wreak havoc in your life.

3. **T - Take inventory of your life:** Is this how you want to live? Are you satisfied with how things are going—while you are in control? Are you happy with your salary? . . . how the government is caring for you? No? If you want God's unparalleled favor and grace to work on your behalf, why not try His way?
4. **A - Act in faith:** As Nike would say, "Just do it." If you'll do it without fail, God will not fail you. But don't do it perfunctorily; do it in obedience. Faithful givers who believe God's Word, believe that His promises will be revealed—just as He has said.
5. **R - Refocus:** The Lord is your Shepherd; your Source. The psalmist said in **Psalm 121:1-2 (NKJV)** - "I will lift up my eyes to the hills— From whence comes my help? [2] My help comes from the Lord, Who made heaven and earth. Keep your eyes on Him!"
6. **T - Trust:** As the old song goes, "Trust and obey for there is no other way, to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey." If you dishonor what God has placed in your life, you will not receive the benefits you were meant to enjoy. Honor His Word. It works! Trust Him!