

Paying Attention to What the Lord Is Saying Rehearse and Reflect

Thesis: The words the Lord has spoken to us over the past few years are current. These words have not expired (no expiration date). Our response is to choose courage in the face of fears, opposition, or crises. We can be strong and courageous because God's presence and present word engender faith in us (Joshua 1:9).

Text: *And he said to them, "Pay attention to what you hear: with the measure you use, it will be measured to you, and still more will be added to you. 25 For to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away" (Mark 4:24-25 ESV).*

Friends, here is what I know. The Lord is speaking. God is leading us as a people.

Forging Our Future:

The Lord is at work in and through us, and he has invited us to partner with him. These times are challenging and exciting. It is a great time to be alive!

When Joshua and the people of Israel entered their promised land, they faced obstacles, adversaries, and challenges.

The same thing is true for us in our journey. Currently, we face a financial obstacle that we need to rise up and overcome in the months ahead. Our goal is to raise \$160,000 between now and October 31.

I want to invite you to read the details of what we are doing to rise up and tackle our current financial situation through the [Forging Our Future Fundraising and Pledge Campaign](#).

This significant opportunity gives us the chance to dialogue with the Lord, to obey the Lord, and to step out in faith in the Lord. And, we get to do this together. I believe that the Lord is leading us to overcome this challenge. I believe in your capacity to hear and respond to the Lord. And, I believe that together we will overcome this financial obstacle.

I am asking every member and regular attender of Calvary to be all in.

Please fill out your response card by Sunday evening, July 25.

And, to those who have already responded and/or given, I want to say a big "Thank You!"

Paying Attention to What the Lord is Saying.

Let me say it again. This is what I know. The Lord is speaking. God is leading us as a people.

What has the Lord been saying to us? Are his words to us over the past few years expired? Or are they still present words?

The words the Lord has spoken to us over the past few years are current. These words have not expired (no expiration date). Our response is to choose courage in the face of fears, opposition, or crises. We can be strong and courageous because God's presence and present word engender faith in us (Joshua 1:9).

And Jesus said to them, "Pay attention to what you hear: with the measure you use, it will be measured to you, and still more will be added to you. 25 For to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away" (Mark 4:24-25 ESV).

I want to take time to rehearse and reflect upon some of the words which the Lord has given us over the past few years. Our God is a great leader. He knows where he is going and he knows how to get there. Our part is to partner with our God, working out what he is initiating and working in us (Philippians 2:12-13).

Let's rehearse and reflect upon what the Lord has been saying and doing among us over the past few years. (Note: you can find the different messages and series at <https://calvaryhouston.com/sermons>.)

1. **Expectation:** word for 2018.
 - a. The Lord wants to grow holy expectation in us, an active faith that embodies confidence, anticipation, and expectation in God (Hebrews 11:1, 6).
 - i. *Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see (Hebrews 11:1).*
 - ii. *And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him (Hebrews 11:6).*
 - b. We need a holy expectation in the Lord.
 - c. Without expectation, we live dull lives which are unaware of and untuned to the Lord and what he is doing and what he wants to do among us.
 - d. When you come to our services, attend your small group meeting, or gather for any reason, I pray that you come with a holy, growing

expectation that God is here, that God is moving, and that we get to partner with the Lord and bless what he is doing.

2. **More of God:** word for 2019.

a. **For 2019, I believe that the Lord gave us:**

- i. **A word:** *more*.
- ii. **A declaration:** *this is the year of the Lord*. We are a people who live in the favor of the Lord (Luke 4:19).
- iii. **A prayer:** Zechariah 9:11-12.
 1. *As for you, because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will free your prisoners from the waterless pit. 12 Return to your fortress, O prisoners of hope; even now I announce that I will restore twice as much to you (Zechariah 9:11-12).*
 2. Because of God's faithfulness (he gives his word and keeps his word; covenant), we can pray for freedom for the prisoners who are trapped and for double restoration for what has been stolen.

b. **Let's touch on the word for the year: more.**

- i. The Lord is speaking to us about responding more intentionally to the prophetic words which he has given to us. One word that is stirring involves *The More of God* revelation which Pastor Steve shared with us in 2017. In the fall of 2017, Pastor Steve preached a series of messages rooted in Ephesian's teaching on the Spirit and God's promises. Those messages stressed that Paul wanted the church to have more than doctrine; he wanted the people to move into personal experience.
- ii. If God is such a powerful promise maker, is not the mature response for us to be promise takers? Have we been promise takers?
- iii. There is more of God for us to experience—our Triune God is the Infinite, Eternal One. And, God wants more of our lives— all of us (heart, mind, soul, and strength; Matthew 22:37-39).
- iv. *I pray that the Father of glory, the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, would impart to you the riches of the Spirit of wisdom and the Spirit of revelation to know him through your deepening intimacy with him. 18 I pray that the light of God will illuminate the eyes of your imagination, flooding you with light, until you experience the full revelation of the hope of his calling —that is, the wealth of God's glorious inheritances that he finds in us, his holy ones! 19 I pray that you will continually experience the immeasurable greatness of God's power made available to you through faith. Then your lives will be an advertisement of this*

immense power as it works through you! This is the mighty power 20 that was released when God raised Christ from the dead and exalted him to the place of highest honor and supreme authority in the heavenly realm! 21 And now he is exalted as first above every ruler, authority, government, and realm of power in existence! He is gloriously enthroned over every name that is ever praised, not only in this age, but in the age that is coming! 22 And he alone is the leader and source of everything needed in the church. God has put everything beneath the authority of Jesus Christ and has given him the highest rank above all others. 23 And now we, his church, are his body on the earth and that which fills him who is being filled by it! (Ephesians 1:17-23 Passion Translation).

- c. We need to seek God for more. What Jesus died to give us is so much more than we are walking in. Redemption is a beginning, not an ending. It is a doorway into the fullness of God. It is a mature response to seek the more of God.
- i. **God is a promise maker; therefore, we are to be promise takers.**
 - ii. God has made all kinds of promises.
 - iii. The intentions of God are amazing.
 - iv. **But, we walk in so little of what God intends.**
 - v. Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, they shall be filled. Whatever you hunger and thirst for, God will use it to fill you.
 - vi. So, stir up your expectations. Want more. Ask God to fulfill his words.
 - vii. **God is also a promise keeper. Therefore, we should live with an attitude of being promise seekers.**
 - viii. As we seek God for who he is, we honor God and bless his heart. "If you seek me, you will find me" (Jeremiah 29:13). If will be seekers, to have an expectation, God has something to give us.
 - ix. Illustration: Moses: "Show me your glory" (Exodus 33:12-23). It blessed God that Moses asked for more.
 - x. God wants us his people to know him in his immanent nearness and his transcending dominion.
 - xi. **We are a church of presence. Hungry hearts draw his presence.**
 - xii. We have God's word, promises, and prophecies; and yet, we fail to experience the reality behind them. What good are God's promises if they don't work? God wants it true in your life. What good are your doctrines if they don't work?

- xiii. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have come into our lives so that we will experience the Lord, his promises, and his realities.
 - xiv. We have interpreted the texts, but we often fail to experience the reality behind them.
 - xv. **Our first response to this *More of God* revelation is to increase our capacity for connecting with the Lord and for living in the awareness of his presence.**
 - xvi. We want to experience more of God, and we especially want our children, youth, and young adults to encounter God more deeply.
 - d. We need to seek God for more. What Jesus died to give us is so much more than we are walking in. It is a mature response to seek the more of God.
 - e. Join us in praying and seeking for the more of God.
3. **Return to our first love:** Aug – Dec. 2019
- a. **The Lord confronted us with a word from Apostle Mosy Madugba in March 2019:** “You have left your first love.”
 - b. **Praise the Lord, it is easy to return to our first love with the Lord helping us.**
 - c. *Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. 5 Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place (Revelation 2:4-5).*
 - d. God has called us to: Remember. Repent. Renew.
 - e. May we be a people who continually return to our first love.
4. **Pursuing deep intimacy and full partnership with Jesus:** word for 2020.
- a. As Pastor Joshua Rushing was teaching from Song of Solomon in the fall of 2019, the Lord hooked me with a phrase.
 - b. In Song of Solomon 1:4, the bride says, “*Draw me after you; let us run together.*” This is her life’s vision, Pastor Joshua said.
 - i. I want you to draw me away with you.
 - 1. “Take me deeper.”
 - 2. She wants deep intimacy.
 - ii. And let us to run together.
 - 1. “I want to run with you in partnership.”
 - 2. She wants full partnership.
 - c. In Song of Solomon Chapter 8, we see the mature bride living into her vision, living into deep intimacy and full partnership with her Bridegroom King.
 - d. May we make progress like this bride and become the partners with Jesus whom God has called us to be. May we keep pursuing deep intimacy and full partnership with Jesus.

5. **Reset:** fall of 2020.
 - a. This pandemic was an opportunity to reset, to put first things first. This opportunity to reset is one of the redemptive purposes of the Lord in this season of crisis.
 - b. Reset is one of the redemptive assignments for responding to this season when COVID-19, racial unrest and injustice, political divisiveness, fear, and anger have knocked so many people off their center and game. The Lord has spoken to us about pursuing deep intimacy and full partnership with Jesus for 2020. Our journey began with a time of returning to our first love from August – December of 2019-- *First Love: Remember. Repent. Renew.* Then, we began 2020 with a *21-Day First Love Fast*. Then, COVID hit. It was a global reset.
 - c. We aren't looking to go back to business as usual. Rather, we want to get in on what God is doing versus acquiescing to the "new normal" which the media and pundits talk about.
6. **Realign:** word for 2021.
 - a. Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel 28 without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God. 29 For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him, 30 since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have (Philippians 1:27-30).
 - b. **Steadfast** (Philippians 1:27): *stand firm in one spirit.*
 - i. Don't give up; don't give in. If you don't quit, you win.
 - ii. *He who endures to the end will be saved* (Matthew 10:22; 24:13).
 - c. **Unity** (Philippians 1:27): *contending as one for the faith of the gospel.*
 - i. God commands us *to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. 2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. 3 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:1–3).*
 - ii. **Listen to what God says about sowing discord and dissention.**
 1. *There are six things the LORD hates, seven that are detestable to him: 17 haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, 18 a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, 19*

- a false witness who pours out lies and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers (Proverbs 6:16-19).*
2. *Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, 21 envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24 And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another (Galatians 5:19-26).*
- iii. The Lord has given us the message and ministry of reconciliation to God and to one another (2 Corinthians 5:14-21).
- d. **Courage** (Philippians 1:28): *without being frightened in any way.*
- i. Courage is a part of God's divine image in us.
- ii. We get to choose courage in the face of fear, crisis, or opposition.
- e. **Joy** (Philippians 4:4): *Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!*
- i. **We said that joy is the fuel of the brain.** That is the way that God has wired us.
- ii. We get joy from our attachment to God and others, being the sparkle in someone's eye or seeing their faces light up (Numbers 6:23-27; 2 Corinthians 4:6).
- iii. Reflecting upon gratitude moments or golden memories is one of the ways to attach to the Lord and to fuel our joy in the Lord.
- f. There will be many opportunities, controversies, and challenges in the coming years to see where we are in or out of alignment morally or missionally with the ways of Jesus. The Lord wants to help us to realign, we might respond in ways that line up with the good news of our King.

Summary:

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Today, I wanted us to take time to rehearse and reflect upon the words the Lord has given us over the past few years. Our God is a great leader. He knows where he is going and he knows how to get there. Our part is to partner with our God, working out what he is initiating and working in us (Philippians 2:12-13).

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Questions:

What is the Lord stirring up in you? What are you thinking? What are you feeling?

I invite you to respond to what the Lord is putting his finger on or stirring up.

Ministry Time: