Shedding Weight in the New Year

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We are nearing that time of the year when people come out with their New Year's resolutions. Probably 9 out 10 of them had to do with shedding weight. But anyway, so people go through their usual New Year's resolutions to do this and that and the other thing. And it is just a common thing. It's just people do it.

And as we were worshiping the Lord this morning, I sensed the Holy Spirit speaking to my heart. And the Lord just ministered just quietly in my spirit and said to me that the world takes this next time period of time to shed weight that it doesn't want. And my people do not know how to shed the weight of their burdens. And they take them into the next year and the year after that and the year after that.

And of course, that Scripture from Matthew 11 came to mind where the Lord extends to you and I an invitation: "Come to me, all you who are weary and..., (heavy laden) and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28)

And rather than take Him up on that invitation of shedding the weight of our burdens and the difficulties and the challenges that we faced, which by the way, you were never created to carry. Your shoulders were never created to carry the burden of those kinds of weights. You just can't do it.

Some of you are dealing with those kinds of things; family issues, expectations, desires, dreams, and it's just not turning out like you want. And there are people that you love who are going through hard seasons, hard challenging difficulties. Some of you, yourselves are going through very, very difficult circumstances, and you just can't carry it. You can't bear the burden.

God wants you to know that He doesn't intend you to. That it was not His purpose or His plan that you should go through life carrying those burdens year after year. And that is why He gives the invitation: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, (or heavy laden) and (Jesus said) I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28) There's a promise connected to that invitation: "I will give you rest." Rest for your souls. Oh, how we need rest in our souls.

Listen people, the burdens of life can make you crazy. I mean, they can literally make you crazy. And we as Christians who are, and I'm talking about people

who are called by the name of Jesus. And people know that we're called by the name of Jesus and we're walking around just as crazy as the rest of the world because we have not learned the art of taking those things, and laying them at the feet of Jesus, and trusting them there with Him.

This isn't what I intended to talk on this morning, but this is just the direction the Lord is taking my heart. And I share it with you as not just a reminder. It certainly is that, but also a call, if you will, a call to respond to the invitation of the Lord. And to take seriously the promises that are connected to the Word of God.

Because you see, there's this gigantic disconnect in the body of Christ today between what He has told us and how we live. And I see it in my own life. I see the inconsistency, it's like, why am I not applying the promise of God here? Why am I not walking in peace? Why am I not walking in joy? Why am I wring my hands in anxiety about whatever life may be presenting right now?

Because, right? Cause life can present some pretty creepy stuff. And you all know that. And the difficulties of the things that you're dealing with on a regular, ongoing basis are so burdensome. I mean, to the point of being oppressive. Oppressive.

Have you been oppressed lately by what life has been seeming to throw at you? I understand that. I've felt oppressed to the point where I pulled an Elijah and asked God just to kill me. That's what Elijah did. Life got so oppressive to him, he just wanted to die. That's a hard place to be sometimes. Sometimes you just feel like just packing it in. It's like, Lord, I don't think I can take another day this way. I don't think I can go another day.

Sometimes, we read in the Psalms, that same expression, that attitude that says, Lord, if You don't lift me up, I'm not getting up. Sometimes there you come to that place, don't you? Where you just, you can't make it another day on your own and you cry out to God and you say, God, I just, I can't do this. I just can't do it. I can't go on.

Sometimes that's a good place to be because we stopped trying to carry the struggles and the burdens and the challenges. And that's a good thing because as I said before, you weren't created to carry them. You can't do it. You can't do it.

So many times we want to. We try to. We got to just buck up, and there's so much of this self-help drivel that goes around in the world today about being a self-made person and I'm going to just be strong and courageous.

And there's times that your courage fails. There's nothing to draw upon. There's nothing there. The barrel is empty. You're at the bottom of it, and you're—and you see nothing that you can use to draw from. And it's very, very challenging. And boy, don't think that isn't an opportunity for the enemy to rush right in to sow the seeds of discouragement.

And when we become discouraged, we lose hope. Right? That's what the enemy of course wants you and I to do. He wants us to get to that place where we are so discouraged with life and ultimately with God that we lose hope, and we just say, well, you know what? I don't think there's any, I don't think there's any way we can pull out of this thing. I don't think there's any help for this situation, and I think it's just a matter of just time until this thing tanks completely. And I don't think I even want to sit around and wait and watch it happen.

One of the things I absolutely love about the Psalms, when you read through the Psalms. Psalms are a great place to live, by the way, when your life is hard. Let me, can I just tell you that right now and encourage you in that?

If life is difficult for you right now, if you are feeling the weight of difficulty and the challenges of problems and so forth in your life, just your address needs to be Psalms and stay there. Just live there and let the ministry of the Psalms just wash over your heart.

When I'm going through, particularly, I try to read a Psalm every day, but when I'm going through a difficulty I just, I read the Psalms every day. I just, I read tons of them and use it to strengthen my heart because there's so, I can so relate. When the Psalmist says: "How long, O LORD? (how long) Will you forget me forever? (Psalm 13:1) That's pretty honest talk, isn't it?

There's people that go around today saying, if you talk like that, it just shows that you don't have any faith. And it just shows that you're hurting. That's all it shows. It just shows that you're hurting and the psalmists never we're concerned about expressing their real emotions to God. They never had any problem with that. They didn't ever have this sense of, gee, I better not write that down in the Psalms. Good grief, it's going to be kept around for time and eternity, and I will forever be known as a person who lacked faith. We're ever concerned about that.

They just laid it out honestly before God. This is the way it is, and I'm hurting and I need You. How long? "How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever?" That's how the psalmist started off. Many times. "Will you forget me?" How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and every day be anxious in my heart and

be tormented by my thoughts and my ideas? How long is this going to go on God, before You come in and You help me with this? Those are real questions.

Jesus comes along and He says to you and I: "Come to me, all you who are weary and..., (heavy laden) and I will give you rest." The problem is we don't really lay hold of those first 3 words, which is: "Come to me,..."

I don't know whether it's pride or just ignorance or what it is, I'm not really sure, but we just don't come to Him like, like we should. I mean, we really don't just run into His arms like we need to at a time like that. And I don't know if we think it just means come to church or something like that, but He says, "Come to me, ..."

Jesus is a person who is waiting to embrace you in the midst of your difficulties, in the difficulty of your challenges, and your hurts, and your pains. He wants to embrace you as a person. He doesn't say, come to My doctrine. There's nothing wrong with doctrine. I love the teaching of God's Word, but you know what? It can leave you cold if there isn't a person behind it.

He doesn't just say, come to prayer. People have been praying from the earliest times, and people say to me all the time when they're talking to me about God, and I think they think it impresses me, but they say to me, I pray all the time. I don't care. I mean, that doesn't mean anything guys. People pray to all kinds of things and all kinds of deities.

The question is, do you know Him and are you coming to Him? It's one thing to pray. It's another thing to come to Him in prayer; to literally be with Him and talk to Him in prayer. And to lay it down and I mean have an honest talk.

And I and prayer is not just this, oh, holy gracious, redeeming God, who would inhabit us eternity with all the King James English that makes it sound so majestic. I'm talking about the kind of get real conversation that says, God, how long are You going to forget me forever? That really just pours out the heart of the petitioner and lays it before God, and weeps before the Lord, and allows Him to see your tears. I'm talking about a real relationship with God that lays it out in honesty and sincerity.

So many people say to me, I just don't know how to pray. Do you know how to talk? That's all it is. That's all prayer is. You talk to me, why can't you talk to God? You know what people are saying when they say, I don't know how to pray. They're saying, I don't ever do it and so I'm really out of practice. I don't usually, I talk to people, I don't talk to God.

It's been a problem for a long time. I mean, even the disciples came to Jesus and said, teach us how to pray. (Luke 11:1) People have been wanting to know how to go about doing that. But one of the things I love about the way Jesus taught them to pray is just, it's just real. It's just dealing with the issues of life; forgiveness, and provision, and trust, and so on and so forth.

Can I take you over to Matthew chapter 6 for just a moment? Would you open your Bible there? Once again this was not where I was going to go today, but I had... Here, I did all that studying. Oh, well, I guess I'm good for next week. Now Sue's going to ask me to do things on Saturday. You can help me with some things, honey cause you studied last week. I always tell her. Well, I have to go over my notes again.

Matthew chapter 6, skip down to verse 25. For those of you going through a hard time, those of you facing a brick wall, for those of you dealing with anxious thoughts. For those of you dealing with pain, I want you to hear Jesus speaking to you personally today.

Verse 25. "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, ..." Stop there. Now He's going to go on and talk about various other kinds of anxiety. But don't think that just because He enumerates the issues of what you're going to eat, what you're going to wear, and stuff like that, don't think that's the end of what He wants you to be anxious about. Don't think that's the only thing He's telling you not to be anxious about, to employ a double negative there. Do you see what I'm saying?

He's saying, don't be anxious about your life. Boy, what would life be like for you and I if we really truly laid hold of that exhortation and we lived it. What would that be like? How would your life be? Mine would be glorious.

Don't be anxious about your life. Why? See, here's the thing that we normally want to ask Him. Why? You see, it's one thing for somebody to tell you, hey, listen, don't worry, but we come back and we go, why? Why shouldn't I worry?

The reason that Jesus is saying to you and I not to be anxious about our life is because He wants you to know that it is in His hands. He's saying to you and I, I've got this. No, more personally, I've got you. I've got you.

Well, that's the part we struggle with sometimes because we don't feel sometimes like He has us because we are enduring situations and circumstances that we can't imagine that He would want to come into our lives. See, that's the thing that shakes us, doesn't it?

He says, on the one hand, I've got you, and on the other hand, we see that what He's got in our lives are such difficulties that, that we're like, it makes us question, either You don't have me God, or You have some things that you've approved for my life that I'm not very happy with. And I can't imagine that You would allow this sort of a thing to come into my life if You're truly a loving God. I just really can't fathom this sort of a thing.

Listen, that's the enemy talking, and the enemy is speaking to that area of your life that he knows he can reach, and it's that area of exalting human reason above the very will of God. And he comes to you and he says, if God really loved you, He wouldn't be allowing this kind of stuff to happen in your life.

And what that conclusion presumes is that you know what's best. And your ability to look at your life and to reason out what you are going through exceeds the understanding of God's will in your life. And that is a presumption you and I cannot afford to make because the fact of the matter is, brothers and sisters in Jesus, we cannot know because the Bible tells you and I that, as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are His ways higher than our ways, and His thoughts and our thoughts. If you want to read it for yourself, that's Isaiah 55.

Bottom line, God knows best. And believe me, I have dealt in my own life with many circumstances for which I had no cognizant reasonable idea why in the world God would allow this to happen, and yet He did. I have watched, as other people have gone through circumstances for which I could reach no reasonable conclusion why did God allow this in their lives? And yet He did.

But at the end of the day, you and I have to take our human reason and we have to lay it down at the foot of the cross. At the very throne of God and say, you know what, God, I don't get this. I can't figure this out but that doesn't mean that this isn't Your perfect will for my life. That doesn't mean that I'm going to reject it out of hand because you see, I don't understand and I don't see.

What did Paul say in 1 Corinthians? We see as if we're looking through a mirror, dimly. It's a very dim sort of a picture you and I have of this life that you and I are living. And the things that we are going through, and the things that we're enduring, and the things that other people are enduring. We just don't get it. We don't see the whole picture and we don't know how it's going to end. We don't have a clue how it's going to end.

And we think we do because we've seen how things appear to conclude for others. And we assume the conclusion is going to be the same as it relates to our own lives. And so we come up with these presumptions and then at the end of

the day, it's presumption on our part. And so we cry out to God, oh, and we're just a mess.

And all the while God says, do not be anxious about your life. That's easier said than done, isn't it? I mean, for some of us, anxiety over life is like breathing good grief. Tell somebody not to be anxious about their life, you might as well tell 'em to hold their breath and yet as natural as it seems, Jesus would impose upon you and I a supernatural Ministry of His Spirit that would enable you and I to walk in His peace, Not yours. Not yours, not mine. Oh, mercy. Jesus said, peace I give you, not as the world gives. Because the world's peace, boy, that can just be out the window just like that, can it? (John 14:27)

We feel at peace when things are going well, and then something collapses in on itself, and instantly our peace is gone. Jesus said, peace I give you not as the world gives. In other words, I give you peace that lasts even when the roof is falling in. I give you peace that endures even when everything around you seems to be coming apart. I give you peace. What is it?

What exactly is that peace all about? It's that peace that comes from resting in the knowledge that His sovereignty, His grace, and His power are covering our lives. Are controlling our lives, and are keeping our lives in the purpose of His will

When I was younger I used to hear people submitting to the sovereignty of God, and I used—to me it sounded like just a defeatism. It sounded when they would say things like, hey, God's will is going to be God's will. And I would look at it as kind of like, you sound to me like you've just been defeated. It's more like an attitude of resignation rather than willing submission. Do you understand what I'm saying? Like you're just, you've given up. Oh God's pretty strong, there's no way I can resist His will anyway, so what's the use? Might as well just say, okay, God, Your will be done.

That's not what we're talking about here. And when I heard that as a younger Christian, I misunderstood the heart behind it and thought that it was just this, I've been defeated attitude, but it's not. It's, I'm being kept, I'm being watched over. I'm being held within the arms of my Savior and I trust that the will of God is the best.

Boy, those are hard words to say, aren't they? Especially when the will of God appears, at least for the foreseeable future, to include some pain. It's a hard thing to say, God, you know best, and yet we need to say it. We need to learn to say it. And more importantly, we need to learn to believe it. Do not be anxious

about your life. Do not let anxiety crowd in and defeat you, and discourage you, and bring you to the place of feeling like all is lost. There's no hope, because again, that is the purpose of the enemy. He comes to steal, to kill, and to destroy your hope, and God wants to fill you with hope.

People, can I tell you what our hope is? Hope is not in a thing. Our hope is not in an event or a circumstance. Our hope is in a person. Jesus is our hope. Hope is personified in Jesus Christ. He is our hope. And as long as you and I put our hope in an event, or an outcome, we are going to be continuously disappointed. God, I hope it turns out just this way. Well, I understand that and I hope things happen sometimes the way I want them to happen too.

But ultimately, if I don't let go of that, and if I don't come to the place of saying Jesus, I submit to Your will above all things and I'm going to put my hope in You. What does that mean? It means that You know best, that You know what You're doing, that You have me in your hands. That You're going to guide me and direct me. And keep me and walk with me. And teach me, and instruct me, and give me peace, and fill me with grace. If I don't put my hope in you Jesus, I will ultimately be just like the people of the world with very little reason to live.

As Jesus goes on speaking here, He again, He specifies, don't worry about your life. Don't be anxious about what you're going to eat. What you're going to drink, about your body. About your body. How much time do we spend worrying about our bodies? Wouldn't it be nice if we could get that time back. What you'll put on?

Then He asks this incredible question, is not life more than the things that you worry about, such as food and clothing. Just take some time and look at the birds of the air. They don't plant, they don't harvest. They don't pack it all into barns for safekeeping and storage, and yet they continue on.

He says, "... your heavenly Father feeds them. (and) Are you not of more value than they?" Do you really think He cares more about the birds than you? "And which of you by being anxious (by worrying) can add a single hour to his span of life?" If anything, you'll take some away, but you're not going to add. You're not going to add any time to your life. And the time that you do spend in anxiety is not going to be quality time, right? Oh, we ruin tomorrow worrying today. It's incredible.

"²⁸ And why are you anxious about clothing? (good grief, He says) Consider (just think for a minute about) the lilies of the field, how they grow: (and) they neither toil (they don't work for their clothing, or weave their clothing, or

whatever He says) ²⁹ yet I tell you, (not) even Solomon and all his glory was arrayed like one of these. ³⁰ But if God so clothed the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe (or take care of) you (and then He says, what you and I need to hear) O you of little faith?"

Guys, that's us. You might as well just print that on your forehead, then you can explain when people read it, what it means, because that's where we are. That's who we are.

He says, "³¹ Therefore do not, (don't) be anxious, saying, 'What... (are) we (going to) eat?'" What are we going to drink? What are we going to wear? "³² For the Gentiles seek after all these things,..."

That statement, "For the Gentiles seek after all these things,..." Just put the world in there, okay? Because it's essentially the word Gentiles doesn't— it was a term used back then to mean unbelievers. And so He's saying that's what unbelievers are running after.

People think about it. Think about what the world runs after. It's pretty much the same stuff we run after, isn't it? I mean, let's just face it. It shouldn't be, but it is. We're running after all the same stuff they're running after. We want all the things that they want. We just christen them. They want long life. They want special lotions and potions and procedures and things like that to preserve their youth and their health and their vitality. And they're into vitamins and supplements and all that stuff.

We believe in miracle healing. And we go around telling each other, you should never be sick if you're a Christian. And it's just the same thing the world is running after we've just christened it. It's all it is.

You can see that the Christian Church lags behind the world. What the world runs after, we want to, we just simply put it in a Christian context. And what we end up doing is we just end up worrying, just like them. Just being as anxious as they are about whatever we don't have in life, or whatever we think we ought to have.

But I love how Jesus says there, the world seeks after all these things. The world runs after these as goals. But He says, but your heavenly Father knows everything that you need.

Some people wonder, well then why should I pray? I mean, if God already knows everything I need, then why should I pray? He already knows. I'm not telling Him anything He doesn't know.

God wants to have a relationship with you. He wants to talk to you and wants you to talk to Him. And so many times in the course of that conversational process, we grow, and we learn, and we understand more than if we hadn't talked it out with Him.

Do you know, I have found in my own life, and I'll bet you have too, that the times that I've really invested myself in prayer, it was more—I got more out of it than what I went asking for. Because it was through the process of prayer that God began to speak and reveal and illuminate way beyond what I think I originally went to talk to Him about. It's interesting that way.

You go to talk to God about a particular issue and you come away with just this, just boatload of abundance that God has blessed you with. That's like, you didn't even go to talk to Him about that. Didn't even think that was a problem. Didn't even think that was a need.

So prayer is more about just going to the Father and presenting yourself before Him saying, Lord, I need You. I need to hear from You. So don't be put off by this statement that your Heavenly Father knows all the things that you need before you ask Him because He wants to have a relationship with you.

And then Jesus goes on. And then in verse 33 is so important and it's a reminder that you and I should put in our hearts every day: "But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness,..."

What that means is, as a first level of priority, be about the kingdom, the work, the business, the matters of the kingdom of God. Seek first the kingdom of God. Let me put it in different term. Run after the kingdom of God first before you run after anything that this world has to offer or holds in store. Before you even think about it, go first to the matters of the kingdom, the thoughts of the kingdom.

It's interesting. This whole I discussion about the kingdom of God. You might say, well, where? Where is the kingdom of God anyway? Jesus said, the kingdom of God is within you. We are an interesting people we Christians because we're living in a kingdom within a kingdom. We also live in the kingdom of this world; the kingdom of man. And we know who the ruler of that kingdom is on a temporary basis.

We know Jesus referred to Satan as the prince of the power of the air. And he's the ruler of this world. Of this world and the things... But see, within the context of that kingdom, there is a kingdom called the kingdom of God. It begins within us, and it grows outward. Jesus told many parables to describe the growth and expansion of the kingdom of God. You can go through them and look at them. And it encompasses many matters and concerns that you and I are to be directed toward, and yet we find ourselves more often than not, considering the matters of the kingdom of this world the most.

What we're going to eat, what we're going to wear, what's our body and this and that, and how you feel and this thing and this, that, and this job, and this money, and this, and health, and these other issues. And these are all matters of the kingdom of man; the kingdom of this world. But we have allowed them to so dominate our hearts.

Do you know, I'm willing to bet that if we, if I sat a lot of Christians down with a piece of paper and a pencil and said, describe for me just, list 5 matters of the kingdom. They would've a hard time listing just 5. They're not accustomed to even thinking about it.

When God's Word tells you to seek first the kingdom of God, what are you looking for? What are you seeking? Most Christians are like, I don't know. I mean, if they're going to be honest, and the reason is because we don't think about the kingdom of God on any kind of a regular basis. So how can we be seeking it? Fact of the matter is we're not, we're not seeking God's kingdom. We're seeking, the kingdom of man.

We need to just, we need to pray and meditate on this. God, what does it mean to seek Your kingdom and Your righteousness? To put that as the primary focus of my life. What does that mean exactly? What are You telling me to do? What are You wanting me to think about? What are You wanting me to focus on? Because I need to know the answer to this question because it's what You told me to seek first before anything else. The kingdom of God.

What would you write down? If I gave you a piece of paper today and said, write down the definition of the kingdom of God. What is it? How many of us would sit there and tap our pencil because we're just really not sure? Well, it's something we better be sure about. We better start becoming acquainted with what it means to seek first the kingdom of God. Because it's what we've been told in the Word of God to do, and we have ignored it to our own undoing.

And it's one of the reasons, not the only, but one of the reasons why we are filled with anxiety, and anxious thoughts, and despair, and disappointment, and hopelessness. It's because we've focused not on the kingdom of God. We focused on the kingdom of man, and it's not providing according to our needs and desires, it's letting us down every day. It's disappointing us.

Relationships fly apart at the speed of light. Our bodies decay and break apart and people's hope is lost. And we see it all around us. We see corruption of every kind; emotional corruption, physical corruption, political corruption. We see it all around us and we look and we just, and we despair. But we're looking at the kingdom of man. We were never told to seek first the kingdom of man,

And Jesus made this beautiful promise by saying that if you will seek first, if you will put as a first level of priority in your life, the kingdom of God, and the righteousness of God. All these other things that you would otherwise be worried about, and anxious about, and burdened about, will come. They'll be taken care of.

God has this amazing sort of principle that is laid out in His Word that basically says, put Me first. Put Me first, and all these other things that you would otherwise waste your time worrying about, I will take care of. But those things are not going to seemingly get taken care of while your eyes are on them and while your anxious thoughts surround them.

It's when you turn and say, the kingdom of God is the focus of my life. Pleasing You, living for You, serving You, that's my goal. And these other things I can't control, nor can I carry. I can't carry them. I would break if I tried so I'm not even going to try. I'm going to give them to You.

I'm going to take you at Your Word: "Come to me, all you who are weary and..., (heavy laden) and I will give you rest." Okay? (Matthew 11:28) God, I'm going to take You at Your Word. I'm going to lay these down and I'm going to trust You with them. How needful is this? Does this resonate in your hearts guys, as we go into 2015?

Don't you think we as Christians, we need to learn how to drop the weight. Not the ones around our waist or wherever it happens to pack on your body. I'm talking about the weight of your heart.

You and I have got to learn how to drop the weight, and it means it's all about coming to Jesus. Come to Me. I will, I will give you rest. I will see to your

needs. I will take care of you. I will work these things out. Stop trying to manipulate life.

Oh, we go crazy trying to manipulate people and circumstances and things to our benefit, but we do it out of fear because we're not trusting God. Trust in the Lord with all of your heart, with all of your heart. Don't lean upon what you can think through, or work out in your own strength, or cleverness, or intelligence. Instead, acknowledge the Lord in everything you're going through, in everything that you're faced with. Acknowledge the presence of God. Acknowledge Him.

Do you know what that means? To acknowledge the Lord in all of your ways? Have you ever walked in a room and had somebody ignore you? Have you ever had that happen? What they're doing is they're not acknowledging you. You can walk into a room and they're just go about their business. It might just be only the two of you and they're just doing their thing. And then you walk out of the room and they never said boo. And you know that they knew you were there, but they didn't acknowledge you.

Do you know that's the way we treat God. We who are called after His name, who are born again by the Spirit. We will go through a particular situation and we won't even acknowledge God. It's like He isn't even there.

Acknowledge the Lord in all of your ways, in all of your circumstances, in all of your pain, in all of your challenges, in all of your difficulties, acknowledge the Lord. God, I'm acknowledging You as the Lord of my life. I'm acknowledging You as the one who's going to carry me. Guide me, direct me, fill me, give me peace. I'm acknowledging You as the source of my strength. I'm acknowledging You, Lord God. And He will direct your paths. That's the promise. And He will direct your paths.

We all want to talk about God directing our paths, but we don't get busy doing what we're supposed to do, which is trusting in the Lord with all of our heart and acknowledging Him in all of our ways. We must listen. These are conditional promises. You got to understand that.

Christians like to think that all the promises of God's word are unconditional. Well, they're not. God's love is unconditional, but His promises are very conditional. Trust in the Lord with all of your heart. Lean not on your own understanding. Acknowledge the Lord and He will direct your path. You see, there's things that we need to do. We need to be about the work of the kingdom, taking seriously the Word of God, doing what it tells us to do.