

Revelation 21
My God Is Infinitely Bigger Than My Problems
Pastor JD Farag

KAPONO: Thank You, Lord. Would you join me as we pray? Thank You, Lord, in Jesus' name. Lord, we thank You so much for this time. Lord, we thank You. Can't be thankful enough, Lord, that You have provided for us, knowing the times to come, with a place, Lord, where Your word is being preached, Lord, by pastors who You've given the courage and the strength to preach Your word from the Bible, chapter-by-chapter, verse-by-verse, Lord.

So Lord, would we be blessed this morning in Your word. Give us understanding, Holy Spirit. And we thank You, Lord, for this time together. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

PASTOR JD: Amen and Amen. And good morning and welcome. So glad you're here. You can be seated. Those of you online, we're so glad that you're joining with us as well. There are a couple of things, though, that I want to mention before we get started, the first of which is that our prayer meeting is coming up this Tuesday, this upcoming Tuesday, which is August 5th, 7:00 p.m. here in the sanctuary.

However, my wife, Kellie, has an extremely important doctor's appointment that day, actually the day after as well. And so I will be by the side of my bride all day on Tuesday. Also, Pastor Leitu has a memorial service for a friend that he will attend. So Pastor Mac will be doing the prayer meeting on Tuesday night, and I sure hope that you come and make plans to attend in our absence. I know you'll be blessed if you do.

The second thing, real quick, is related to how doubtless we're all thanking and praising the Lord that there was no tsunami Tuesday after the warning and ensuing evacuating of multitudes of people. However, and yes, there's a "however" here. I've been inquiring of the Lord about what I did see, which led me to thinking about and praying about what I didn't see.

Now, why do I mention that? I mention that because I would covet your prayers as I continue seeking the Lord in this regard should He permit me to expound on some of the prophetic parallels, of which I find many. So would you do that? Would you, just as the Lord prompts you, just pray for that? Poor Pastor JD, he needs all the help he can get. I would very much appreciate it.

All right, let's get into the Word. *Revelation*. We are going to finish *Revelation* today, Lord willing, the second to the last chapter of the last book in the Bible. We're in *Revelation*,

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almost done with *Revelation*. So we're going to pick it up where we left off last week in our verse-by-verse study through this book and start off in *verse 15*.

Now, this will be a longer than usual passage that you'll be standing for the reading of God's word. So if you're more comfortable sitting, we won't look at you differently. Please make yourself at home. Whatever you prefer.

The Apostle John, by the Spirit, *verse 15, Revelation*, continues writing what he saw. *Verse 15*. He says, **"The angel who talked with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city, its gates, and its walls. The city [Verse 16] was laid out like a square, as long as it was wide. He measured the city with the rod and found it to be 12,000 stadia in length, and as wide and high as it is long. He measured its wall [Verse 17] and it was 144 cubits thick by man's measurement, which the angel was using.**

[Verse 18. I'll do my best on these pronunciations] [But just keep in mind this is an Arab that's trying to do this] **The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass. The foundations [Verse 19] of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, carnelian; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprase; the eleventh, jacinth; and the twelfth, amethyst.**

[Let me catch my breath.] [That wasn't too bad, was it?] [I hope I didn't butcher them.]

[Verse 21] The twelve gates were twelve pearls..."

Oh, now you know why and where they get the pearly gates. Right here. Listen to this.

"The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. [That's one big oyster right there.] [Sorry.] The great street of the city was of pure gold, like transparent glass. [Verse 22, interesting.] I did not see a temple in the city, [He's going to tell us why.] because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city [Verse 23] does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp.

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The nations [Verse 24] will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. On no day [Verse 25] will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. The glory [Verse 26] and honor of the nations will be brought into it. [And then the last verse, 27] Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life."

Yeah. Man, we should just close in prayer right there. We won't. Let's pray. I didn't want to get your hopes up. God, wow! Lord, wow! I mean, just wow! Thank You for this and all of its detail. Thank You for inspiring John to write it and preserving it for us well-nigh 2000 years later.

Lord, certainly there's a blessing here for us. There's encouragement here for us. There's a renewing of hope in here for us. So would You, as only You can, by the Holy Spirit, bless the understanding of why we have this in our Bibles to our hearts as we apply it to our lives. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen and amen. You can be seated.

This is one of those passages, oh, my goodness, that you just, you have to ask — and there's nothing wrong with it — why do I have this in my Bible? Oh, there's a reason, and I am convinced that one of the reasons, there's many, is that God wants us to know that He is infinitely bigger than any of the biggest problems that I'm currently facing in my life today.

As we just read and are about to see in the text that's in front of us, God in His unfailing love, mercy, and compassion for us inspired John to write this to give new hope and encouragement to us, especially those who are just really going through it right now. I mean, these problems are just insurmountable, impossible. And you're looking at your problem, and as long as you keep looking at your problem, it just keeps getting bigger. And as it gets bigger, you get crushed under the weight of its enormous size and even how terrifying it is.

Enter this wondrous and glorious detailed description of our home for eternal life. And you can change everything, now, in this temporal life. You don't even have to wait. That's why we — one of the reasons why we — one of the main reasons why we have this in our Bible.

Okay Pastor. That's kind of a — that's a bold claim. That's something a pastor would say. Okay, that's fair. How? How? Well, I'm glad you asked. By setting our mind on things

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above like this instead of things on earth. Whatever it is, you fill in the blank. Which just so happens to be exactly what the Apostle Paul, by the Holy Spirit, wrote about to the Colossians in *Chapter 3:1-2*. Listen to this.

“Since then you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.” Set your heart there. Then *verse 2* he's going to take a step further, maybe like two steps further. **“Set your minds...”**

Wait, let me get my heart there. Because wherever my heart is, there will my treasure be also, right? So let's get my heart there. Now let's talk about your mind. Because that's where the real battleground is, right? **“Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.”** Busted. I'll admit it. Come on, we're in church. Be honest. “Set your mind on things above, not on earthly things.” Well, I do the opposite.

Verse 2 in the JDV reads: “Set your minds. Set your mind, JD, on earthly things, not on things above.” And you'll be miserable, fearful, joyless, hopeless. Should I just keep going? You want to fill in the blanks? No, this is what Isaiah said, isn't it? **“He will keep him in perfect peace, [Perfect peace] whose mind is stayed on thee.”**

Well, come on, Pastor, haven't you heard that well-known quote? There's a lot of quotes from Mark Twain. Just to give you an idea about who this guy was, I don't mean to be derogatory, but he was quoted as saying, “When your child turns 13 years of age, put them in a barrel and seal it. And then when they turn 18, cut a hole.”

Now, that was just a setup for another well-known saying of Mark Twain. “You can be so heavenly minded, you're of no earthly good.” And I think nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, it's the opposite that's true. I know we've talked about this before, but I think it is apropos in the context of what we're going to see today. The more heavenly minded I am, the more earthly good it will be, and I will be, and the more earthly good it will go for me.

Because **“Happy is he [One translation renders it] who keeps his mind on Christ.”** Think on heavenly things. The Apostle Paul to the Philippians, 4:8, **“...think on these things.”** And he gives a whole grocery list. **“Whatsoever things are pure, righteous, of a good report.”**

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Our problem is we got stinking thinking, and we need a check-up from the neck up. I stole that from somebody. I don't even know his name. I think it's true. Because as a man thinketh in his heart. Interesting, the proverbs say.

Wait, do I think in my heart? Yeah, actually. **“As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.”** You are and become what you think. In other words, this is the brain center. Literally, the brain is the brain center that sends messages, emails, texts — there's a lot of others. I'm not going to use the other platforms or apps, but — through the rest of your body through the central nervous system. Breathe, and it's automatic. And there's a certain part — the brain is so complex. Oh, my goodness.

But when we read a verse like this in Colossians where the apostle Paul says, **“Set your minds on things above not on earthly things,”** what does that tell you? That means that we are all prone. We have this proclivity, this propensity to set our minds on earthly problems instead of heavenly solutions. We're looking at the problem, and it grows bigger. And we're looking at God, and He gets smaller. Conversely, we keep our eyes on Him, our minds on Him, our hearts on Him, and He gets bigger. And that problem? Pfft! Where'd it go? Smaller. Where's my microscope when I need it?

Okay. You ready? Three reasons. Three reasons. I want you to listen carefully to how I'm wording this. It's important. Three reasons as to how believing, seeing... Stop. Not seeing is believing. That's what the world says. Jesus said believe and you will see. Believing, seeing, and fixing our eyes, hearts, and minds only on Jesus and our home in heaven can diminish, even extinguish our biggest problems here on earth.

Do you believe that? Why else do you think that John would be inspired to write with such specificity about these precious stones that nobody could pronounce, the measurements, by man's standards, of our eternal home, if it were not to kind of give us a hope, new hope about what we have to look forward to?

Because when we have something like this to look forward to, I mean, He's given us the blueprints. Whoa! This is way more bigger than I thought. Listen, You pulled out all the stops, God. You ain't seen nothing yet. Just wait till you get here. I mean, God. (Stumbling over words)

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Wow! So now I'm fixing my mind on that. I'm keeping my mind on that. I'm setting my heart on that. I'm looking with my eyes to that. And in comparison — I'm not trying to minimize the problems, the trials, the difficulties, the hardships, the pain, the suffering. Instead, I just want to revisit this glorious and wondrous promise that awaits. And three reasons that fixing our eyes and thinking on our home in heaven can just, I mean, seemingly dull, diminish, extinguish our biggest problems on earth.

First one, *verses 15-17*. Our eternal home is unbelievably huge. You know, as a pastor, I didn't used to have the vocabulary I have, which is not much of a vocabulary, but I'm doing my best here. I mean, you know, we use this word quite a bit, right? That's huge! You think that's huge? That's not huge. What awaits us is huger. It's the hugest-er. That's not a word, but just let me have it.

Okay. John, in these verses, writes about the angel measuring the city, the gates, and the walls, and he does so with a rod of gold, and he does it according to man's measurements. What does that tell you? These aren't some heavenly measurements only understood in the eternal, glorified state. No, I'm going to bring it down to a level that you in your finite fallenness can understand. I'm going to use your measuring tape.

Why? Because I want you to understand how big this is. It's unbelievably big. I'm just going to say — you're probably tired of me saying this, but it's just too unbelievable to be believable. But you better believe it because God said it. And for God to even specify that, hey, this angel that's going to do the measuring of how huge, unbelievably huge our eternal home is going to be, the holy city is going to be. We're just going to make it simple for you. We're going to use your measurements. How's that? Why are you going to use man's measurements? Because we want you to grasp this.

Okay. So how unbelievably huge is this holy city? Oh, it's enormous. I was thinking of another word, but it escapes me now, and it's not in my notes. So skip it. So enormous is the size of this (Tripping over words) (Chuckling) city, that it's measured at 12,000 stadia. Now, some of your translations render it furlongs. Stadia is the Greek word from where we get our English word "stadium."

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Stay with me. What does 12,000 stadia come out to by man's measurements? Wait for it. 1500 miles. And that's 1500 miles in length. 1000 — Is that length? No. That's length. You got it. 1500 miles in length, in width, and height. Do the math. Total = 4500 miles. That's — what about the square miles? Oh! Astronomical. One has suggested that the square footage of the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, our eternal dwelling place, our heavenly home will have the square footage about the size of the moon. Just to put it into perspective for you.

And by the way, even on a full moon night, you know, you can put a quarter — if you can't afford it, a nickel's fine — up and it will completely block out the moon. And I think that's a very good object lesson because that's what we do with God. We take that nickel-sized problem and we put it in front of our big God of the impossible. We completely block Him out. He's eclipsed by a nickel, something so small and worthless, by the way, just so you know. So we'll have the ushers we don't have collect all your nickels. No, we don't do that. We don't even receive an offering.

We haven't even got to the walls yet. This is, I have to confess, even in some ways more intriguing to me than the size of the Holy City, our eternal home, our heavenly home. The angel measures the thickness of the walls, which, by the way, are transparent, crystal clear, see through, which we'll get to in a minute as to why. So how thick are these things? I know my walls at home.

Now, if you're still living in a tongue and groove, single-wall construction home, what is that about? Is that even an inch thick? You know, now code is, if you build on, you have to do the double wall, right? So I don't think that really ministered to anybody, but I actually have a method behind the madness. Because the measurement of the thickness of the walls comes in at 144 cubits by man's measurements.

Wait, what's a cubit? Well, 144 cubits comes in at about 72 yards. So picture a football field. You're on the 28-yard line. You look back at the finish line, 72 yards back. That's how thick these things are. That's what I'm talking about right there. There are some thick walls. I've never heard of such a thing. Oh, no eye has seen, no ear has heard.

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Let's go to the second one. And we're going to get into the personal application of why this detail. Because now we're getting into the jewels and the gold in verses 18-21. And so in addition to our eternal home being enormously huge — is that what I said? Enormously huge? Okay. Our eternal home is amazingly beautiful. I mean, John continues, writing about these 72-yard-thick walls as being made of jasper.

Do we have any jewelers? I don't even know what color jasper is. And by the way, just, it doesn't matter because this is not like jasper here. What, God's going to go to a jewelry store on earth for jasper in heaven? No. He created it. He created it. And incidentally, and I need to — this is probably as good a time as any — explain to you that the colors, the beauty, the splendor, the purity, all of which God created. And now He's creating it again. For who? You and me. I feel special. No, it's not you. It's Jesus. Because your name is found in the Book of Life.

So they're made of jasper, and the city is so pure in gold it was as glass. What's glass? Well, you see through glass. Some of you guys, you know who you are — and women too, I think too, so we're going to be equal opportunity offenders here today. You walk by a storefront and there's a tinting on the glass and it shows the reflection. So you suck it in. Come on. Am I right? Again, be honest.

But this is not like any glass we've ever seen before. And these colors are not like any colors we've ever seen before. And these precious jewels? Forget it. We have never seen anything like what we're going to see in heaven. It's the likes of which we, as finite, fallen man have never seen.

But be encouraged, be of good cheer. We will soon, by the way of the looks of things right now. What time is it now? I mean, it's really soon. And that's not hyperbole. And I'm not trying to be dramatic or sensational or provocative or anything. No, I'm for real. For real, man. It's getting real, man. And it's getting real close, man. I can't wait.

Okay, let's go from walls to foundations to these pearly gates. Where's Peter? I didn't find him anywhere. Isn't Peter supposed to meet us up there at the Pearly Gates? Well, you need to know he's not going to be there. (Stumbling over words)

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I just want to give you a heads up before you go up, so you're not surprised when you don't see Peter at the pearly gates of heaven. And if you are surprised or act surprised, can you, again, just do me a solid — don't say that you came to — (Chuckle) nevermind — my church. “Where did you go to church?”

“Oh, I went to that windward church on the windward...”

“Oh, that guy.”

Okay. Anyway. Now, wait. They're not just the pearly gates. I think that's almost, you know, I don't know what's the word I'm looking for. Let's not reduce it to the pearly gates. So you've got all these artists renditions. They take artistic license and liberty in their renditions of. This is why you'll never see me, as long as I live and have the privilege to be the pastor of this, God's church, you'll never see me with on the screen an artist's rendition of the Savior. I can assure you; He don't look like that.

And I don't want you to be surprised when you see Jesus. Because you're going to see Him as the Lamb, behold Him as the Lamb that was slain. And you're going to wince. He's not some, you know, blue-eyed, you know, long-haired, wimpy. Right?

No, He was a man's man. When brought before Pilate, after being tortured and butchered in horrific, unthinkable ways, and He was brought before Pilate, and Pilate said, “Behold the Man!” I’ve never seen a man like this before. I’ve never seen a man survive this before. Behold the Man.

I don't know what you think your Jesus looks like, but my Jesus is the Man. He's the God Man. Please don't make Him less than that. Because He's not. He's the Son of God and God the Son, incarnate. So I'm basically asking you to just take all of those pictures off your wall and burn them. I have scripture, by the way, to back this up. There was nothing about His outward appearance, physically, that stood out.

When He was arrested and betrayed by Judas in the garden, in Gethsemane, that night before He went to the cross, He didn't, you know, like He didn't have a glow about Him. You know, ommm, you know, halo around Him. No. They didn't even know. They wouldn't know Him if He walked in the front door.

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That's why Judas said, you will know who He is because I'll give Him a kiss and that's how you'll know. He just looked like the average Middle Eastern — I'm sorry for that. You know you can't un-see that. But I'm Middle Eastern. So I probably look more like Jesus than you think. Thank you very much.

I want to be like Him. The Holy Spirit's full time — this is full time, overtime job at work, making me more Christ-like. Big job. Taken a lot of years. Over 40 years. It's still not there. I feel sorry. The first thing I'm gonna do when I get there is I'm going to apologize to the angels that got my file. "I'm so sorry." "So are we. You know, we asked if we could trade. They said no, no way, man."

Okay, back to the sermon already in progress. So these jewels, these walls, these foundations, these gates. Single pearl. And the city streets being pure gold, transparent as glass, pure as glass. Why? Because it's for the radiating and illuminating of the glorious holiness of God. Oh, I can't wait.

There's one more. *Verses 22-27*. Our eternal home is purely spectacular. If you got a better word, let me know. But that's the best I got. Of particular note in these verses is that, interesting, there's no temple, no sun, no moon, and no night. Why? No need. Jesus is all we need. Well, how am I going to get a tan? Yeah. I'm sorry. I shouldn't look at anybody when I say that. You know, I need to get my vitamin D. No, no. No need up there.

In fact, it's seven times brighter than the sun here on Earth. Plenty tan. No worries. Plus, you got the reflection of transparent glass. Pure. Radiating. Illuminating. I think I'd be — maybe this is a good time to share a quote. It goes like this: You'll never know Jesus is all you need until Jesus is all you have.

"Yeah, but Pastor, I have some big problems."

"Yeah, but Jesus is bigger."

"I have huge needs."

"Yeah, but Jesus is huger."

So again, the description, the specificity. So pure is His light. So bright that the nations walk by it, kings bring splendor, glory, and honor into it, and the gates are never shut because of

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it. In other words, they're always open. Well, remember last week? The angels are at each gate. Man, what are they going to do? They're not going to open or shut them? No, they're just going to stand there and look good. Look pretty. Just stand there and look pretty next to that pearl. The pearl is actually brilliant and beautiful.

Why is the angel there? Not to guard it. Not to protect it. No need. Because we're told that nothing impure, shameful, or deceitful will ever enter into it. Because only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life will forever be living in it. I think the angels are greeters. Because we're going to be going in and out. They're never shut. We're not going to have to knock. Hey! No. How's that going to work to knock on a pearl? Ouch! Oh, I have a glorified body. That's right.

No, I think the angels are there. "Hey! Welcome. Glory. Hallelujah. Worthy is the Lamb that was slain." I think they're just the welcoming committee of 12 angels at 12 gates made of one big, beautiful — not a bill. Well, that went over like a lead balloon. One big, beautiful pearl. So are we good? How huge. Beautiful. Spectacular.

Okay, Pastor. Thank you so much. That was an excellent and superb exposition of the passage. But my alarm clock's gonna go off tomorrow morning before I hit it again. By the way, be of good cheer. There will be no need for alarm clocks in heaven either. That alone, stand alone, right? I need to know what this spectacular, magnificent, beautiful, huge, unbelievable, eternal home has to do with me now, today.

Because I'm going to leave your church — not my church. It's God's church — I'm going to leave this church today, and you don't know. You don't have a clue what I'm going back home to. I probably don't. In some ways I do because I'm just like you. I may not look like you because, remember, I look like Jesus. No.

[Laughter]

I get it. Let's talk about it. You want to talk about it? Let's bring this full circle to the takeaway for all of us today concerning God being infinitely bigger than any of my biggest problems. And again, this is not to, you know, this is not just some clever title I came up with. This is true. He's infinitely bigger. What? Is there anything too hard for the Lord?

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Hey, you know, it's almost like the Lord's asking us seriously, do you think that there's anything impossible for Me to do? Do you think there's anything too hard for Me to do?

Let's start with our temporal homes, especially here in Hawaii. Small in size, filled with cockroaches, and being eaten away by termites. I'm talking about my home. Actually, I'm actually talking about my home. Not necessarily so much small. But I'm looking at this thing. I see this pile. And I sent it to, you know, Frank Tanaka, our builder, and, you know, I said, "What is this?"

He goes, "Dude, that's termite droppings."

I said, "Man, it's getting bigger."

He said, "Termites are eating your home away."

Man, I can't wait for my new one. I can see them things, if they're even there, try to eat through pearls, precious jewels, pure gold as transparent as glass, all the above. Why are you doing this, Pastor? What's your point here? Or do you even have a point?

Yes, I do have a point. I'm just going to be open with you and transparent with you and say to you that, you know, sometimes I look at, you know, just home repairs, right? There killing me. No. Right? Have you ever — is it just me or the washer and dryer break down at the same exact time as the refrigerator and the car and everything else? It's the same time. It's a conspiracy. I'm thinking, oh, no! Are you kidding me right now? This is the worst possible time. Oh, so I'm going to go to *Revelation*. I don't see any appliance repairman anywhere. You see my point?

You know, consider this. Could it be that God allows these problems, everything to break down at the same exact time, at the very worst time, if for no other reason other than to get us to remember? Oh, yeah. This is not my final destination. This is just temporary. Those of you who rent homes by way of illustration, what are you going to do? I mean, you call the landlord, of course. But are you going to remodel the kitchen? You're renting? You're not going to be there very long. Well, how long is your rental agreement? Six months? One year? I mean, that's ludicrous, isn't it?

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But we do that. Hold on loosely to the things of this world, man. You know not when they will be required of you, or taken from you, or eaten away by cockroaches for you. I mean, termites. I hate them both, actually. I truly do wonder if — I don't know. Is there such a thing as a glorified cockroach in heaven? Well, I don't think. No need. I wish there would have been in that list: No sun, no moon, no night, no cockroaches, no termites, no none of the 'ites.' None of that. But it doesn't say that. So I guess we'll find out.

Okay. While these problems, big or small, will *[Will]* soon and very soon come to an end, wouldn't you agree that we would all do well to start focusing on our eternal home now, before the end, if for no other reason than to refocus the attention of our lives?

You know, as a student of Bible prophecy and now teacher of Bible prophecy, one thing, and I speak for myself because this is what Bible prophecy, studying Bible prophecy has done in my life. It has loosened my ever-tightening grip on this world and the things of this world in anticipation of the next. I mean, nothing wrong with having things in this world, but don't let the things of this world have you. And hold on loosely to them. Because at the end of the day, at the end of time, it's all going to burn.

I remember on the mainland, a brother in the Lord bought a new car. And of course, all of us were jealous. Kind of like, oh! You know, like, you know, first of all, what are your payments? "I paid cash." "Oh!" That's way worse. So one of the brothers, in Jesus' name, of course, said, "You know, bro, it's going to burn."

I don't know; made me feel better that he said that, until it did. It caught on fire and burned. I called up that brother and said, "You better get out of town, man because that was a prophetic word. You were you — it burned to the ground." Well, that'll teach him a lesson right there. I know I took that way too far.

But let's talk about financial problems. (Loud sigh) Seemingly, the financial problems are getting worse with each passing day, especially now in this, the last day, as we covered in the Prophecy Update today. May I humbly recommend that you read, not just read, but take heed, take to heart the words of Jesus in *Matthew 6*. You'll want to write this down. This has saved my bacon over the decades walking with Jesus more times than I could ever begin to tell you. *Matthew 6:19-34*. The whole part, really the whole chapter is the sermon

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on the Mount. But one of the well-known verses in *Matthew 6* is *verse 33*, where the Savior says, listen, **“Seek first the kingdom of God [In heaven] and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”**

Translated: If my mind is on Him, my eyes fixed on Him, my heart is where my treasure is with Him in heaven, all the problems, all the needs, all the issues. I'll take care of all that. Let's flip it back around. You need to get in alignment and get your priorities right. And your first priority is the kingdom of God and His righteousness. And everything else will fall into place.

See, what you've done is you've sought first all of these things to be added unto you at the expense of the kingdom of God and His righteousness. And I'm here to tell you, trust me, I've tried. I've got the scars to prove it. It doesn't work that way.

Here's how — what that looks like and sounds like. Yeah, I'm going to serve the Lord when I get all my ducks in a row. Dude, you don't even have any ducks. You know what that is, right? That's an — they have a word for it. You ready? Wait for it. It's an excuse. It's an excuse. No, no, no, no. You serve a Lord now. He bring the ducks. He'll line them up.

I don't know what that really means, “Getting all your ducks in a row,” where it originated. But, you know, I just picture mommy duck and all the baby ducks being in single file in a row behind. You know, I'll say to my wife because she knows how I am. Pray for her.

I'll say to her, “Honey, I'm just trying to get my ducks in a row.” And she says, “Yeah, I see that.” And so because I'm one of these — I know they have clinical terms for this. I just, things need to be organized. So she sees that I, you know, have everything straightened up. So she comes when I'm not looking. She's like (Changing things) just to mess with me. I love her so much. It's just... Who's first? Who's first?

In addition to *Matthew 6:33*, would you also please read and take heed to *verses 19-21*? I'm going to read them real quick because this, I mean, this settles it. You've heard it. You know it. But are you living it? Are you applying it? This is what Jesus said: **“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust [And termites] destroy and where thieves [And stablecoin and the government] break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves**

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treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

You know, I know your heart's right. Wait. Not so fast. I know your heart's in the right place. Not so fast. Show me where your treasure is first, and I'll tell you if your heart's in the right place. Because see if my treasure is down here, that means my heart's still down here. And that's the problem. You know, the more you have, the more you have to worry about losing. Did you get that? And the less you have, the less you have.

Let's talk about a car real quick because I, you know — just because I want to. But you got a buss up car, right? I mean, this thing is just — I mean, it's on its last leg. It's so bad, you want somebody to steal it. You've even pre-written, a thank you card to the thief. “Thank you so much for stealing this buss up car. Take it. Please.” So I got it insured, and I'll try to get something nicer.

Wait. What's your point, Pastor? The value we place on earthly things dictates where our heart is at. If the things of life have grown strangely dim, as that timeless classic hymn of old says, by keeping your eyes — I love it. I just want to cry. My eyes are on Jesus. And things of this world grow strangely dim even here in Hawaii that they call paradise.

Man, when you have your treasures laid up in heaven and your mind on Him and your eyes on Him and your heart on Him. I mean, we live in a beautiful place, and we're so privileged to live on the islands. But they're just like pointers to the eternal paradise that makes this temporal paradise seem like nothing by comparison. Again, nothing wrong with owning things, enjoying things. But I do want to pose a question that all of us need to ask ourselves, myself included. Does what I own own me? Think through that.

How would I know? Oh, you adjust your schedule around it. It owns you. You devote most of your time to it. It owns you. So what do I do? I need to make a heavenly transfer of that earthly treasure. What do you mean? Well, apparently, you have placed great value on whatever it is, you fill in the blank, here on earth. And that's why your heart is there in it. Because your heart is where your treasure is. That's why your mind is always on it, thinking about it. That's why your eyes are always on it.

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Okay, let me have this one. That's why you're washing it every day. Was that too much? Heavenly transfer. Here's what I did. It's really dorky. But I'm a dork for Christ. I've literally — not literally. Maybe better said, I've transferred the title deed of the ownership of all that God has abundantly blessed me with back to Him because He owns everything. I'm only the steward. I'm the owner — and this is not a Klaus Schwab. Please don't do that. I literally own nothing, and I'm very happy because He's entrusted me with the stewardship of everything. And that's what makes me happy and brings me joy.

So my house in Kailua. Lord, where do I sign? Now it's Your problem. By the way, You got a big termite problem. God, you're going to have to... No, right? Am I right? Well, we have a couple more. And just bear with me. And I appreciate your patience. But we need to talk about family problems, which, for those with a prodigal son or wayward daughter can be so, so heartbreaking. And I get it. I've lived it. I've been there. But God.

As a fallen, finite, earthly father, He, as our heavenly Father has settled my heart with this life-changing truth. And I want you, if you hear nothing else that I say today, hear this. He loves them and wants to save them more than you ever could. That should settle your heart, calm you down, cause you to look up, lift up your head. Do you really believe that, what I just said? God loves your son, your daughter, your grandchildren. He wants them right with Him more than you ever could love them or want them right with Him. He does? Of course! Well, then what am I freaking out about? I don't know. You tell me.

Again, I'm not trying to diminish the seriousness or the gravity or the enormity of the situation you're facing in your family. But I just want to encourage you with God's word of truth. He loves them. I think about the well-known parable of the prodigal, which to me is one of the most profound prodigal — this is when you know the sermon should have ended by now — parables in all of the parables that Jesus taught. Why? Because you have to understand the cultural dynamics in the Middle East in that day, in both the Hebrew culture and in the Arab culture, my culture. The father never runs to the son. The son better be running to the father. Get here! Get over here, boy!

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But in the parable of the prodigal son returning home, we find the father, a picture of our loving Heavenly Father, watching in the driveway — just let me have that one — every day for his son to return. And doubtless he's praying because he loves him so much.

“Yeah, but what did he do? He took his inheritance and blew it on prostitutes and gambling and casinos and drugs and drinking!”

“I love him unconditionally. And I miss him.”

And when that father sees his son from afar, he gathers up his robe and he runs to him. This is unthinkable in the middle east. He embraces him. And then he gets his servants to prepare the biggest feast they've ever had in their lives. Because his son is home. That's Him. That's His love. That's how much He loves your son, your daughter, you. Whoo! I gotta talk about marriage problems.

Don't look at your watches. I'll be done in a minute. Just this one I'll — I'm going to try to make it as simple and painless as I possibly can. Marriage problems. I know none of you have marriage problems. And I also know that you know, the pastor and the pastor's wife never have marriage problems. Because after all, pastors' marriages are perfect. Ha-ha. Ha-ha.

In all seriousness, marriage problems can oftentimes be the most serious of all our problems, for which I would like to, at the very least, offer you encouragement that the Lord has encouraged me with in the 37 years that I've been married to the love of my life. It can be summed up in two words.

The two words are: humility and forgiveness. I know that might seem like an oversimplification. But those two words are so powerful. Example: You're in a, you're having an argument. Now, for pastors, we call it intense fellowship. But you're having marital conflict. You're going, “Oh, man, what about you? That's the pot calling the kettle black!”

By the way, two words. Different words. Never — burn these words out of your vocabulary when you're talking to your husband or wife: “Always” and “never.” You always... You never... Don't do that. Don't do that. Always and never. You always... You never...

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I mean, there are fighting words. Well, let's introduce humility and forgiveness into that argument you're having. Shall we? I hope I'm not coming off as like, you know, oh, man, you got this all figured out. I am clueless, man, when it comes to this. I still look at my wife, and I still go I know Peter said dwell with you in understanding, but (Shaking head).

You know, you, like a dog who just looks at you like I don't — we — “I don't understand you. You expect me to read your mind?” “I mean if you really love me, I wouldn't have to ask.” Oh, my goodness. Shoot me now! Okay. So we're going at it, man. We're doing this!

And then all of a sudden, out of nowhere, the husband — husband, it's on you, you know. You want to be the spiritual leader? Well, take the lead when it really counts and humble yourself and say the three hardest words for men to say, especially men. “I was (Having a hard time getting the word out) wrong.” Humble yourself.

“You're right. Please forgive me.”

How's that argument going to keep going? My wife — true story — early on in our marriage, we're going at it. We're good at too. We're good at going at it. And then it was like, “You know what?” she says to me, “I'm going to tell God on you.”

I was like, “No, no, wait, wait, wait, wait.”

No, she said, “I'm going to beat you to the cross and I'm going to get there, and you're in big trouble.”

I'm like, “No, no. Okay, I'm sorry!”

So I'm sharing this on the mainland at the church I planted there, my first church, for which every pastor owes an apology to their first church. So sorry. But I was sharing this, and I paused at the worst possible time. I said, “Husbands, I'm learning that I need to beat my wife...”

And I paused there. You should have seen the look of horror on the faces of the people. They're like, did he just say that he beats his wife? I should have not taken a breath there because what I wanted to say was “I beat my wife to the cross.” I still can't save it even after that, huh? Because all they hear is you beat your wife.

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Hey, you're the spiritual leader. Take the lead. Be the first one to get there. Beat them to the cross and humble yourself before the Lord and confess your sins. And watch what happens to your marriage.

You know what the antithesis of forgiveness is? Bitterness. And you let that thing take root and germinate and sprout. I don't know how to say this. I'll just say it. It's game over, baby. It'll eat you up from the inside out. You know, I heard a saying. Holding in resentment and bitterness towards somebody is like taking a poison pill and hoping they die. I'll let that just kind of sink in and settle with the Holy Spirit.

Hey, you're — it's eating you up from the inside out. And they have no clue that you're holding bitterness towards them. It's defiling you, it's destroying you, and it's destroying your marriage, by the way. No. Forgive as you've been forgiven.

You know when I would withhold forgiveness from my wife early on in our marriage, all God had to do — this is the old technology — He would have to send me a fax. Remember those things? You young people: What's a fax? Never mind. And I had to reload the paper because it was so long. And it was a list. The font was Arial Narrow, size 5, single space. All the things that God had forgiven me of. And I'm withholding forgiveness for that? Oh, man. I was just all laid out. Forgive me, Lord. I've been forgiven of so much.

Okay, last one and we're done. Thank you for your patience. We need to talk about medical problems, which many, as you know, including my bride, are battling right now. And by the way, thank you so much for all of you that are praying for my bride, specifically for the excruciating pain that she still has after the emergency surgeries.

Can I just pose another question, and in so doing, just by way of a reminder, let you know that it's one that I ask myself more so lately. Here's the question: How often do you think about when our bodies here on earth will be changed in a fraction of a fraction of a fraction of a fraction of a fraction of a second to glorified bodies in heaven?

How often you think about that? And I'm looking at my body, which I don't like to. I don't like to look at my face in the mirror because, you know, like Scripture says, outwardly we decay day by day. I think some decay more than others day by day. I'm looking at this thing going, “Ho! I just saw you yesterday. What happened?”

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But inwardly the new man, spiritually, is renewed day by day. And as you get older — I'm 63. They say you're only as old as you feel. Which makes me 80. So we're clear.

But you know, God is so good. I'm looking at my wife and what the cancer has done to her. I look at myself. And there's the Lord right there, lovingly, gently, kindly reminding me not much longer. To which I usually respond: It better be quick because this thing's got a lot of miles on it, and I don't know how much longer it's going to last. No. I'm giving you a new body. It's going to be perfect. No disease. No sickness. No pain. No pain. Hey, how's that? Just that.

And you'll have hair. I just thought I'd throw that in. We needed some levity. I'm done. I'll bring it to an end. You know when the ultimate and perfect healing comes? And it's going to be sooner than you can — anyone can imagine. It comes at the pre-Tribulation rapture, which brings with it the end — listen very carefully, and I'm done — it brings with it the end to any and all of the biggest problems in my life right now. I'll never forget hearing a prophecy teacher say, I have no problems in my life right now. And he paused.

That's when you should pause. Now you got people's attention. You got no problems in your life? Oh, dude, do you want some of mine? He said, I have no problems in my life right now — pause — that the rapture will not solve. Boom! Mic drop.

And before I drop, I'm going to have Kapono come up and have you stand up before you drop. You poor people. You have treasures in heaven. You know they're going to — you know, that whole thing about where did you go to church? Ho! You went to that church? Oh, that guy went like an hour-and-a-half. Enter in dude! Joy prepared for you.

Okay, let's pray. Father, I thank You for humor. You're the inventor of humor. And humor is medicinal. It is a healing to our bone bones, our bodies, just like a joyless countenance is destructive to our bodies and minds. I thank You for these precious — these are amazing people that You brought to this, Your church. And I'm so privileged that I can be behind this pulpit to teach Your holy, holy word.

Lord, I pray that You'll, as I asked at the beginning, as only You can, make what we just read and studied here real in our lives. That it would change our lives as we apply it to our lives. And so we never look back. We only look up, knowing what awaits. Man, we can't wait to

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see what You've got prepared. Sounds magnificent. Beyond words. Just the colors of it. I really do want to see those pearls and gold. And for us? Oh, how much You must love us. Thank You, Lord. In Jesus' name, Amen.