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I'm going to get to the text in a second, but one of the best parts of this last year, 2025, for me and my family was that I got to take a sabbatical. And because I wasn't technically the lead pastor of a reality, I had never gotten a sabbatical. So after 19 years of ministry, I finally got a couple months off.

And no, I'm just joking. But at the same time, it was a long run and we were super blessed and honored and gifted. We were so grateful for time off to be able to reflect and remember all the things that God had done and get renewed and refreshed and cast new vision for what's God's coming in the next year.

But what I wanted to do was really share something the Lord ministered to me during that time. And really, it was reminding me of some key biblical concepts. And really, while I had space to not be busy, I had space to pray and be still and think and dwell upon the things of God and how it all relates to life this side of heaven.

Like it was a beautiful, beautiful time. And the beauty of that time is we had was it wasn't forced. It was intentional, nothing planned.

Like people are like, what are you going to do on your sabbatical? And how are you going to fill it? And I'm like, no, no, no, no, no, no. The whole point is like not to do anything. Because I'm not sure what your life is like, but between being married, this summer is like 18 years of being married.

So like been, yeah, a lot of time you guys wrapped my wedding and whatnot, praise God. Like I got married young and then I have a nine-year-old and a 12-year-old now. And that's beautiful and amazing, but also busy.

And you know, planting a church and pastoring and all those things on top of all those things. My days and weeks and months and years, at least for like the last 19 years, 20 years of adulthood, I'm 40 now, gray hairs in, you know what I mean? Like it's all, I mean, only my beard though. But as Eric Neistat would say, it only goes up from there.

It's like, thank you, buddy. So I feel you. But anyway, like the last 20 years, at least, it's been beautiful and amazing, but my life has no downtime.

I wish it did, but it has no downtime. Like there is no extra space. There's no space to not do what I'm doing.

No wiggle room, no cushion. And like many of us are here, like you get it. Like you get it in that your life is also that way.

My life's not different. Maybe you're in a different life stage, but like you get it. There are seasons of life where whether it's work or family, all things can be beautiful and wonderful

even, but it's like full of responsibility and stuff.

And there's always to do this and there's always stuff to be done. So there was something that happened on my sabbatical that I haven't felt for like more than 20 years. And that was becoming bored.

No, seriously, like, it's funny to say that like, because my kids being nine and 12 all the time, it's like, dad, I'm bored. This is the thing, right? All the time, you know, there's not, the fun isn't enough or there's not enough friends or whatever it is. Bored is a word that is used a lot at their age.

But what was weird during the sabbatical was I, it was strange. It was an unforeign, an uncomfortable feeling to do nothing because I've just worked since I, whenever you can, 14 and a half, 15, whenever your parents can legally sign off. I started working, enjoyed work, went to school.

Like I didn't have summers off even. I would just work and I would enjoy it. And so this eerie, weird, foreign feeling became and I was like, oh, I think I'm bored.

And again, I don't know when the last time you've been bored. If you've been bored, then like, whoa, like, you know what I mean? Like you should be like grateful that you have that space. Next time you're like, oh my gosh, I'm bored.

You're like, really? Instead of hating that, just know that like that is like an enigma I haven't known. Or many of us maybe don't know. But in this boredom, in this like, what am I going to do with my time? Because I'm on sabbatical and I'm not working.

Naturally, that lent to, you know, beautiful ways, having more time with my kids and family. And, you know, more things to do. But because of that, part of what it was, I was thinking with my kids, what should we do? What have we not had time for? And my daughter, Eva, a lot of you guys know her, she's 12 turning 13 in May.

This is a crazy situation. And crazy. But amazing because, you know, she's such a sweet human and fun and she's growing up.

And so because of this boredom and unintentional, unhurried space, the day had come, you might think I'm going to say something else, but no, I'm not saying anything. When I said, Eva, I think it's time to watch Lord of the Rings together. I think it's here.

I think you can do everything. You can talk through anything you don't understand. But it is time to watch Lord of the Rings.

And I don't know about you, but Lord of the Rings is kind of my thing. Some of you guys are like, just like, yes, I'm tracking with you. Some of you are like, dude, like, why did I come to church today? But I'm going to get there.

I'm going to tie it in to a really important thing. Some of you guys are like, this is crazy. Okay, here you go.

When I was in high school, that was like when the trilogy was made. Like, this was the height of the trilogy. I'm in high school.

And so like, it's very formative for me. And I don't know about you and some of you, I might just be like, not even relating, but some of us, maybe a lot of us, these trilogies in your life maybe shape you or just like, it's a cultural moment and there's, you know, little idioms and sentences that get thrown out. And all of a sudden, like, it's a big part of your life at the moment.

Maybe it's not Lord of the Rings, but it's Star Wars or Indiana Jones or you name it, right? There's these like, big things that even to this day, like decades and decades later, it's just like, you know, I don't know. You collect the stuff, you go to Disneyland, you say the lines. I don't know what you do, but it's still like this big part of like, culture in the moment.

But Lord of the Rings, for whatever reason, I think it was just adventure and like, this team doing this hard thing and all the things. It's so good. Great time of my life, even like, to the point we were so geeks.

Good friends of mine, right after high school, we were so into Lord of the Rings. We had made money at In-N-Out Burger. We had the summer off.

So we're like, let's go to New Zealand. Let's get the guidebook. This is pre like, GPS, iPhone.

So it's like coordinates, like longitude, latitude coordinates of like, where Ediris was on the South Island. You know what I mean? For the Lord of the Rings fans, it was like, incredible, incredible time that happened. But here's my point.

Here's my point. Try to tie this in. There's a lot of lines in Lord of the Rings that are memorable, but there's one, as I was watching with Eva this last summer, that jumped out to me.

And you'll laugh and you'll think it's silly, but God really used it to remind me of a really important biblical principle that should be applied to every part of our life. And it's a line spoken from Gandalf to Frodo, the wizard to Frodo, the ring bearer. Okay, sorry.

I'm not going to catch you up on that if you don't know. But when Frodo, right, he's overwhelmed by this incredibly scary, daunting task ahead of him that's been given to him. And it's just so unknown what's going to happen to him and his friends and his life and his future.

Like he's overwhelmed with the hardship in front of him. And Gandalf says to Frodo, very famously, this is a J.R.R. Tolkien line that he wrote into it, but it's Gandalf saying it, all we have to do is decide what to do with the time that is given us. Again, this is Gandalf's way to speak into this young kid that's overwhelmed of like, hey, I understand, but remember, you've been given a limited amount of time and all you have to do is just be like faithful and do the best you can

with the time that's given to you.

And, you know, that could mean a lot of things, I think, to him at the moment. Like take one day at a time or, you know, take one thing at a time, don't worry about tomorrow. It could have been a lot of different things.

But again, it's jumped out to me and here's why this is so impactful and why I think it applies to all of us. And I think probably pretty potent for going into the new year. In my time off, as much as I loved having that time to rest and be refreshed, and in hindsight, I loved the boredom, I loved what it did, I loved the way I connected with family and the Lord, more time to read, more time to pray, more time to worship, more time to journal.

It's beautiful. But also, I don't know about you, but like if I have space, a lot of space to think, unfortunately, it ends up with a lot of worry. I wish it didn't.

I'm human still. Like a lot of times if I have more the more time off I had, the more time I had time to worry. Because you think of all the things that could go bad, you have time to play the scenarios, you have time to dwell on things.

You know, sometimes when you're busy, you can just like, you know, I got that appointment or I got that thing or I got to go work or whatever. So you just don't have to think about that hard thing. But when you have a lot of time off, not really working and not doing something, it's a lot more time to worry.

But what came out of like that little movie line, as I'm spending time with Eva, was this reminder from God that He is in control, and I'm not, of all that I was worrying about. And that He's given me, and all of us really, limited time here with limited resources. And all that matters, all that matters, is that I strive to follow and honor Him and steward the things that He's entrusted to me.

Again, that's what I got from that. You might be like, that's silly. I'm like, well, let me, I'll take you to the Word of God in a second.

Just hold on. But that's what He's saying. Like we all have a limited time.

We have limited time, talent, and treasure. We have limited resources. And what God reminded me of was this idea of stewardship.

He reminded me on a very personal level that I am not the master of my own fate. Everything's not up to me. And because of that, those things are not mine to worry about.

And again, this is not only a me thing. I hope you know I'm connecting the dots here. This is for all of us at every stage of our life, regardless of what's going on, whether you have a little or a lot, lack or abundance, this concept is for all of us today.

Right? Because really how the Lord was ministering to me was, what is on me? What's on me?

What is my responsibility? The only thing that is on me is just to try to do my best and be a good steward of the time the Lord has given. Sit. You're like, no there's more.

You're like, no there's not. There's really not. That's it.

God does the rest. He's in charge. He's God.

We're actually not. He's God. We're not.

He's in control. We're actually not supposed to lead our own life. We're supposed to be led by Him.

Like you guys, you guys, that was and is and I pray will continue to be a breath of fresh air. And it was like a tangible weight off my shoulders. Because in that moment of having all this beautiful time off, it was filled with a bunch of beautiful worry.

Not beautiful worry, but you know what I mean. Stress and anxiety and the what-ifs and the what if it's not and what's going to happen. And the Lord beautifully and lovingly reminded me that all I needed to do was be a good steward of the time He had given me.

And the question I want to say is, you know, the questions is, can I be all that different from you? So the questions I have on the screen is, do you worry about outcomes? If you say no, I'm like, who are you? What kind of human are you? I wish that was true. I want to meet you. But do you worry about the future? Either on a personal level, a global level, what do you worry about the future? Do you like to be in control? I have yet to hear someone that does not.

Literally, any kind of personality at any age, no one has told me they do not like, they like to be out of control. It's never been said to me. So if that's you, if you worry about outcomes, worry about the future, and you like being in control, welcome to the club.

But please today, if you're going to take away something today, be reminded of the big picture of life with God. God is in control, and He is sovereign and in control of all outcomes. We cannot meddle with His plans.

We cannot get in the way of what He wants to do. And we have to know, and it's a lifelong endeavor to walk in, that His ways are better than our ways and His plans are better than our plans. That is a daily challenge.

That's a daily reminder. Most of us makes plans for the day and the week and the year and the months, and you already have met with a significant other, maybe, and you've planned out the goals for 2026. You have plans.

You have calendars, journals. But have we submitted those to the Lord and say, God, this is what I submit to you, but your ways are better than my way? The Lord, right, man plans his ways, but the Lord directs his steps. Psalmist talked about this.

This is not a new thing. It's not bad to make plans, but we have to know, okay, this is mine. I'm going to submit to the Lord, but Lord, I'm just going to try to be a good steward of my time, but you probably, most likely, have a better idea, and I submit it to you.

That's what this work that God was doing, and I hope today, like my prayer today, is that we would sit in that with the Lord, and like we would trust the Lord in 2026, and all the details, and all the what-ifs, and how it's going to work. We would submit to the Lord, and it would be a season where we can trust more deeply, and follow him more closely, and submit more readily. And I hope that that is a nice, you know, thought to calm our collective hearts that God is in control.

And again, this comes from the heart and the character of God seen in the pages of this God-breathed, God-inspired word that we have. Like, again, I was just using a Tolkien quote to be reminded of a biblical principle, but where that even comes from is where I want to take us today. I know, long intro, but you guys good with me? I mean, that wasn't an intro.

Like, I'm not going to speak for 50 minutes. You know what I mean? But I'm trying to, like, get to the meat here. That's just a personal example, but I'll frame it like this.

If you take notes, Church of Honolulu takes a lot of notes, but I don't know if you do that. If you're taking notes, or you want to take a picture of the screen, there's a few concepts of biblical stewardship where I want to, like, have us really dig into. Number one is this idea of God's ownership.

Okay? The Bible teaches that God is the ultimate owner of everything, and people are merely managers or stewards of his possessions. You may say this, but do we really view it that way? Like, when we get a paycheck stub, and it says, to so-and-so, you feel like, I did this. Do we go, God used me to give me this? Or, like, the deed of your house.

You're like, this is my name on the deed. You're like, but you know, though, real deed owner behind the scenes is actually God. He's given you that as a gift to Or, like, my registration's on my car.

This new nice car I got. You're like, yes, but you know who the lien holder is? God. Not in a punished way, but, like, do we really think that? God, you own everything.

It's all yours. I'm just a steward. This is where I want to, like, hone in, because this is challenging.

This is reorienting, maybe. Maybe it's a fresh perspective, and it's something that we, unless you really hold on to the Bible, like, it's not, you're not seeing this in the world. It's mostly, how did you do? How successful were you? How much did you make? What did you do? What do you have? How are you? Like, it's you, you, you, it's us, it's us, it's us, and unless we are reminded of what scripture tells us, we'll forget the most important part is that we actually don't own anything here.

We're just stewards. That's where this idea of faithfulness comes up. The second point here is that stewards, i.e. you and I, are expected.

Like, this is what's on us. That's on God. He owns it all.

It's all his, but what's on us is that we are just trustworthy and faithful in managing the best of our ability, the resources that He's given us, whether that's time, talents, or treasures. We all have them. That's why today it's like, well, I don't have anything.

You're like, you have, you, yeah, you do. We all have them. We all have time, talent, and treasure until we go see the Lord face to face, until He comes back, or until we see Him.

And here's, you guys with me? Okay, okay, okay. Feel free, you can like, you know, if you need to say something, you know, like an amen. It only helps the person up here.

Just saying. No, no pressure. Be genuine, but no pressure.

Okay, so where we get this, though, where we get this idea, because you're like, that sounds great, but where are you getting this? Okay, okay, I know the Bible. I know Scripture. I'm getting there, guys.

I have a lot of it coming. Started in the garden, actually. Started in the first pages, in Genesis chapter 1. Look at this.

Genesis 1, 28. This is what it says. Okay, so in this creation account where God makes everything, and it's good, and it's very good, and it's beautiful, and there's no sin yet, and it's amazing, and Adam and Eve, He's like, be fruitful and multiply.

But then He says, this idea, He gave this, He gave humanity a task to be fruitful, multiply, and to subdue or have dominion over the earth. And what this is meaning, what this is doing, is actually establishing the concept of responsible caretaking, stewardship. We see it in the, like, pre-sin was God's, like, I made all this stuff.

It's all mine, and it's really good, and I want you to, like, fill it, and take care of it, and enjoy it. You're stewards, though. You're not, they don't own, you don't own it, but enjoy my creation and enjoy my presence.

There was no idea of ownership. This verse in Genesis 1 describes the blessing and also the command given to humanity to have stewardship over all the earth. All the animals, all the plants, all of nature, it's yours.

Take care of it. Do it, like, enjoy it. Go into the mountains.

Fish. Have fun. Be fruitful and multiply.

Like, this is the command. It's so joyful, so wonderful, but also, like, God's, like, take care of it.

Subdue it and have dominion over it, i.e. be a good steward of what I've made for you.

Also, I'm not going to read in the fullness, but if you're taking notes, I want you to write down Matthew 25, 14 through 30. Again, this is a parable taught by Jesus. We know it.

Most of us know it. It's the parable of the talents, right? Different people get different amounts of things, and then the story is, what do they do with those things? Do they waste it? Do they bury it? Or do they multiply the talents? Like, what are you doing with the things that God is giving you? This is, this is, this is this parable. And again, this parable teaches about the different capacities individuals have and the importance of using their resources for growth and profitability rather than burying them out of fear.

That's what this says, Matthew 25. In other words, everything we've been, we have, has been given to us, right? I hope we know that. It's not ours.

Well, I, I did, you know, I got the good grades and the SAT scores to get in the good college, and then I did the major, and then I got the job. But, like, who gave us your brain? Who gave us the means? Who gave us the money? Who gave us the opportunity? Who said yes? God. Everything that God has been given to us, we're to make the most of it for the glory of God.

To build his church, to further his kingdom, to love God and love our neighbor, and to maximize all our time, talent, and treasure for God to do those things. Everything we are is supposed to be looked through this lens of, like, even Jesus boiled it down. What is the most important thing? His disciples asked.

Yeah, the greatest commandment is love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and equally so, love your neighbor as yourself. That's it. How do you do that? Be good steward of all that I've given you.

That's it. You're like, Riz, it's too simple. You're like, no, it's actually really not.

Do it. Read the whole book, Bible, Genesis to Revelation, over and over. Boil it down.

Boil it. Boil it. What does it mean? Oh yeah, I'm supposed to love God, love my neighbor.

How? Well, I think God has given me the breath, and the means, and the home, and the car, and the stuff, and the time, and the talents, and the treasure, so that I can love him with everything I am and love my neighbor. You're like, yep, got it. You're like, what more is there? There's nuances.

Don't get me wrong. There's a lot more, but when you boil it down, that is it. It's not just in Genesis.

It's not just in the words of Jesus. Paul, in his letters, you know, Paul's a big part of why we're here. This is the early church expanding from Asia into Europe to the ends of the earth.

Paul, church planner Paul, he's starting churches. He's raising up leaders. He's raising up elders, and he's communicating to them through either personal letters or general letters, and they're called epistles, but that's really just a letter, and we call it a book with chapters, but it's a letter.

They're letters that he's writing to these churches, and he's trying to communicate, either like he's trying to correct them, or he's trying to really hone in on certain details, or he's trying to raise up leaders, and really trying to communicate what it's all about, and there was a, you know, when he was speaking to the church in Corinth, you know, it's only, humanity does this a lot, but they're elevating the people rather than elevating God, and they're kind of questioning Paul with, um, who's really doing this, and there's this other guy, Apollos, and should I follow him, or should I follow you, Paul, and Paul's trying to correct them in this letter in 1st Corinthians 3, and it says this. Paul says, after all, who is Apollos, and who is Paul? We are only God's servants through whom you believed the good news. Each of us did the work the Lord gave us.

This is the apostle Paul, remember. I planted the seed in your hearts, Apollos watered it, but God, who made it grow. It's not important who does the planting or who does the watering.

What's important is that God made the seed grow. The one who plants and the one who waters work together for the same purpose, and both will be rewarded for their own hard work. We are both God's workers.

You are God's field. You are God's building. Then, in the very next chapter, a couple lines down, Paul also says in 1st Corinthians 4, he says, this is the way any person is to regard us.

This is how you guys should think of us. As servants of Christ, and what? Stewards of the mysteries of God. In this case, moreover, it is required that of stewards that one be found trustworthy.

But to me, it is an insignificant matter that I would be examined by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even examine myself. I'm not even aware of anything against myself.

However, I am vindicated by this, but the one who examines me is the Lord. I love this because in this first illustration in chapter three, Paul's watering illustration, God uses us to plant and water the gospel seed or the good news or the kingdom of God, right? But God is the one who does the miracles. So we actually are a part of the miraculous kingdom work because we're stewards, but God's doing the work, and he's the owner.

We're just stewards. I don't know if you guys have ever gardened or tried to grow anything. Most of you have, but some of you are better than others, right? What's miraculous about this process? That you just put a seed, like it's good soil, and then it's just light and water.

That's it. But you're like, how does it grow? You're like, photosynthesis? You're like, yeah, okay. But like, do you know how like all the food that you go to the supermarket and you see all that? You're like, do you understand how hard it is to actually grow that? God bless all the farmers.

Honestly, you ever tried to grow a cucumber? How hard that is? And like, you got, I don't know, bugs and things, and they're like, oh gosh, how do I do this? But it's miraculous, the growing, the actual growing of the thing. Like, yeah, you plant and you water. Cool, you were a part.

We do have responsibility, but God ultimately made it grow. That's what Paul's saying here. And the emphasis that he makes in four is that God is the owner of it all.

Like, I don't know why you guys are making me and Apollos, like, why are you putting us on the pedestal? God is the owner of it all. We're just stewards. Nothing is ours, but we do have a privilege and an honor and a beautiful responsibility to be stewards, or you could say managers, of all that God has given us.

So it's not ultimately up to us because God's the owner, but we have this beautiful responsibility that God is, like, beautifully ushering us into. And then he's like, here's some time, here's some talent, here's some treasure. Can you be a part of the building of my kingdom as stewards? It's this beautiful invitation we get into his kingdom.

But what's our responsibility? All we have to do is steward the time, the talent, and the treasure that is given to us. To steward, but not to own. And I can understand it's confusing because we own a lot of stuff.

You're like, no, I understand in the world's vocabulary you own your house, but you're like, but ultimately just know that is the Lord's house. Right? That's the struggle that we all walk in. You guys with me? Okay.

So to land the plane, how do you walk in stewardship? It's a good sermon. It's cool. Thank you.

Okay. No, just joking. But okay, cool.

But like, I don't know about you, but I'm, like, very practical, utilitarian. Like, what's that going to do for me? How do I do that? Because for me, it's really hard to—I hear a good thing, but unless I, like, do something, like, I know I'm going to forget about it, and it's going to one ear and out the other. And so today, I want to try to help us with that.

How do you walk in stewardship that we just talked about? Well, I think there's two ways. One is in your identity. Like, you gotta just daily work on this.

Pray this in. Know this, that our identity is we're stewards, and there's a king that owns everything, and we're to follow him into it, but it's not ours. Nothing's ours.

And the other is actions, obviously. Then it changes our life, like, our whole life. I'm not saying you have to be super crazy about this, meaning, like, if you're like, oh man, I don't even know if I can have lunch after church now.

You're like, no, come on, guys. God gives you the money. There's a good taco shop.

Like, go eat the taco. Like, your body needs food. Like, don't be ridiculous.

But it should go, wow, what are my priorities? What are my values? How am I spending my own money? How am I spending my time? What am I doing with the things that God has given us? Because really, like, what God's inviting us into is God wants us to just honor him, and love him, and serve the people well he's put in our lives. Like, start there. If you're, like, overwhelmed, like, okay, well, some people in your life right now may be on that list forever.

Like, family. Or if you have parents, or kids, or siblings, lifelong friends, that's your first. Love them.

Forgive them. Extend grace. Be generous to them.

Start there. Or you might have people that are not on your forever list, but there might be people like jobs, neighbors, or people that come in and out of your life. While you have them in their life, lavishly love them, extend them grace, and forgive them, and show them Jesus.

Like, it's that easy? I'm like, that's not easy. What's not easy? The closer the people, the people you love most, sometimes the hardest. The forever list might be the harder list.

The co-worker that you're barely gonna see, you have no attachment to, that's maybe easier. Not to lose. I'm not gonna see you again.

I'm just saying. But we all have been given these things, and God just wants us to, you don't have to complicate it. Like, do it at church.

There's, like, hundreds of people in this room. Plenty of work to do. Plenty of people to love.

I mean, I'll be honest. I'm gonna do a little serve push right here. You're gonna love this.

But, like, do you guys know that this has to be set up and turned down every single Sunday? It's a lot. So maybe that's one of the ways this year you're like, okay, well, I could get up a little earlier. There's good coffee.

I could come hang out. Lots of fellowship happens. Jump on the team.

Dude, you got time? You got talent? Your treasure? Like, serve your community. Serve your family. Serve your neighbors.

Serve your church. Just do it, though. A lot of times we hear something, and then no action happens.

I'm gonna make this New Year's resolutions. I'm gonna love God more and serve Him more. Okay, well, how are we gonna do it, though? Like, just actually do it.

You know what I mean? This is love. I'm just in love. The goal of our life should be, and again, you guys think it's too simple, but it's true, to just love God and love others with all of God's

resources He's entrusted you to steward.

Like, boil it down. So if you guys are like, man, I don't have a word for the year. There you go.

That's it. I gave it to you. Came to church.

You got your word for the year. I think this should be everyone's word in every generation for every Christian, because it really does boil down to it. This side of heaven, like, I'm gonna love God with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength.

I'm gonna love others as myself, and you know how I'm gonna do it? Because God's given me, given me stewardship over time, talent, and treasure, and it's incredible the things that He's given me. And guys, if you live in this area, we have so much. I know that some of us here, you have real issues and real complexities and real hardships.

I'm not trying to degrade that. But I'm from here. I know you guys.

Like, God has so richly, you guys are some of the most incredible people, most talented people, the most generous people. Like, God has given you incredible things, and that's what's made Reality Carp, and you know, that's my world. So I've been, that's why it's been so incredible, because over the years, my experience, Reality Carp, has been like, you guys have done this.

If anything, I'm just saying keep going, but also be challenged, because I was challenged. I was challenged this last summer to go, oh man, Lord, you're right. I don't have to worry about all that stuff, because I just got to remember, I got to love you and love others with all the stuff you've given us, and like, you're going to do the rest.

I just need to plant water. You're going to do the growth anyway. But if anything, I want to say, you guys have been doing this for like years, years, years, but God has so much more in store for your individual life, for your family, for your neighbors, for Carp as a city, for the coastlands, and for this church.

Amen. Thank you. This is not easy to do.

This is not easy to do. This is the hardest thing that daily you will be tested with. This is not easy.

This is simple, but simple doesn't mean easy. Simple. Don't complicate it, but like, commit yourself to it.

But I will have to say this. Whether you're sitting here or not and feeling like, oh, because all of us, I know we're sitting with, am I a good steward? Am I not? Have I been faithful? How am I not? Okay, I want to just like, instead of like, critiquing yourself and judging yourself, so stop for a second, I want to ask that we would all have grace on ourself. You, in and of yourself, are your hardest critic.

You're the last one to like, forgive yourself or get over. It's like, way easier sometimes to like, let

things go with other people, but a lot of times when we feel like we haven't done something, or we did it wrong, or we wasted something, we like, cannot get over it. And please receive the gospel this morning of grace, and redemption, and renewal, and restoration.

Like, start today of just being challenged to love God more, and love your neighbor more, with the resource he has as good stewards. But again, we won't always get this right, but this is supposed to be a goal that we strive for daily. At least it's where we point the compass of our life, and I know we're not all going to do it right, or whatever, and like, trust me, I know that.

We're fallible. But my exhortation for you today, kind of coming out of that sabbatical, into the new year, is this. My challenge.

To build unhurried and unplanned times into your life, like I was, had to be forced to do, because I didn't have it, so that you have space to be with God, and be reminded of what your stewardship is supposed to look like. Because even though this is, this is, this is broad, like stewardship is broad, but each of us have individual things that we steward. And my encouragement, my exhortation, is to build time, unhurried, unplanned, in your life, so that you have space to be with God, and be reminded, like, God, how would you have me steward? How would you have me love you, and love my neighbor with the things that you've given me? Amen? Amen.

Let's pray. Father God, we, we thank you that you're a God that is so great and mighty, that you created the heavens and the earth, and you, and as the prophet Isaiah would say, you hold them in the span of your hand. Like, that's how big you are.

The heavens, and the earth, and every created thing, to the end of time, is yours. You hold it. But not only are you a great, mighty God, you are a God that is near to his people.

You love your kids. You love your sons and daughters. You want to give them good things.

And God, you have given us so much. As we reflect on our lives, you've given us so much time, so much talent, so much treasure, compared to so many. And God, we just say, God, we, we, we actually and figuratively present all of our stuff, all of our time, all of our talent, our treasure, and say, God, I just want to make a declaration that this is yours.

I am humbled and honored that you've made me a steward of it. But God, I just want to make that declaration that, like, God, it's all yours. It's your time.

It's all my abilities, all my giftings, my personality, all my stuff. It's all yours. And God, as we enter into a time of worship, we pray that you would meet us.

In this time of response, we pray that you would speak to us and minister to us. God, we want to worship you. We want to commune with you today.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.