

Unleashed Introduction – Driving on the Autobahn

Trans – Punch it and let's see what this bad boy can do!

This is how I feel about our church. Instead of playing it safe – let's take our commitment, gifts, talents, abilities, and resources for a spin to see what this bad boy can do!

Over the past few weeks as I've been praying for this month and these messages, I've been awakened on more than one occasion by the H.S. in the middle of the night and directed to a particular verse/text – **Luke 12**. In this passage, we see an exchange b/w Jesus and a crowd of people regarding the issues of the heart and our trust in God. After the initial exchange, it appears that Jesus pulls the disciples to the side and goes even more in depth w/ them. (**Read passage**)

Recap – While there are (4) parts to this exchange b/w (2) groups of people – it is actually one conversation.

The point of the Parable of the Rich Fool is found in v. 21 – *This is how it will be w/ whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God.*

Point – What God entrusts to us (no matter how big/small) He expects us to use for His glory and our good – our gifts, talents, abilities, resources, intellect, etc., to glorify Him.

Then as Jesus breaks from the crowds to be alone w/ His disciples He continues the conversation by saying – stop valuing and worrying about the amassing fame/fortune in this life – do you not think that if you are a good steward of God’s blessings that He will not take care of you – and likely bless you even more. God loves a cheerful, trusting giver.

His point is simple – the heart of the matter is an issue of the heart. If you get so focused on earthly comforts that you miss out on God’s will and plan – then you’ve wasted your life for something that has no real meaning and purpose. Why? B/c where your heart is there your treasures will be.

Don’t miss what Jesus is saying. Only a fool gives his heart and trust in things that ultimately will not matter. Whereas, a wise man gives His heart to God and seeks His will w/ all of His heart – trusting/stewarding His life and resources to honor God and accomplish His commission.

But there is more. Jesus then explains to His disciples the reason for being a seeker of God’s heart, a servant to God’s mission, and a steward of God’s blessings – b/c you never know when He might return and you want to be found faithful at work for the Master.

It will be good for those servants whose master finds them ready, even if he comes in the middle of the night or toward daybreak... You also must be ready, b/c the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him. v.38, 40

If Jesus were to return this second – would you be ready?
Would you be enthusiastic or embarrassed about the condition of your intimacy/fellowship?

Let's put it together. Jesus is telling His disciples that only a fool gives his heart to things that ultimately will not matter – while a wise man lives faithfully to God seeking His will w/ all of His heart – stewarding His life and resources to honor God and accomplish His will – b/c one day (when no one's expecting) when Jesus returns – he wants to be found living faithfully under the leading of the H.S.

Then Jesus explains in vs. 48 how – *From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted w/ much, much more will be asked.*

Jesus tells His disciples – live faithfully out of your gifts, talents, abilities, resources, and blessings. Surrender them to God and allow God to expand them for His glory.

Which brings me to my point – I believe God wants each of us and our church to live *unleashed* out of the blessings and resources He has invested/entrusted to us for His glory!

He wants us to be a people of **INFLUENCE** who use our **AFFLUENCE** of gifts, talents, abilities, resources, and blessings to impact our world for Christ. He doesn't want us to use them for **US** – but for **HIM!**

Reality – Can I be honest? I don't think we have any idea of who we are or what we have been entrusted w/ as a church.

Did you know that out of 40,000+ SBC churches – we're in the top 900 largest churches? I think b/c we're not the largest SBC church in our community we see ourselves as small and only somewhat capable.

Did you know that out of 40,000+ SBC churches – we're in the top 500 largest giving churches? Few churches have a budget of more than \$2 mil. and actually meet it.

Did you know that last year, out of 40,000+ SBC churches we were in the top 200 churches in giving to Lottie Moon?

My point – *to whom much is given much is required.* It is time for us to think and act bigger and to use our influence and affluence for much more than just ourselves. **It is time for us to be unleashed for the glory of God.**

- It's time for us to plant more churches where there are no churches!

- It's time for us to help revitalize struggling/dying churches who can impact people and communities we cannot.
- It's time for us to help send out more missionaries to places we are unable to go.
- It's time for the Bridge to become far more intentional in having a greater influence/impact in our community.
- It's time for us to personally engage and pour into the men and women God is calling to go plant, revitalize, and engage the world around.

LISTEN – God is not calling us to throw money at it or give money to another organization to do it for us. NO! He is calling us to roll up our sleeves, step out of our pews, and get our own hands dirty. He is calling us to personal investment and engagement into the work of the Kingdom using our own gives, talents, abilities, resources and blessings.

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Let me give you an example of what we can do.

What if we became a **Ministry Develop Center** for people being called into the ministry? What if we provided a scholarship fund to assist people being called out of our church into ministry to help fund their ministry education?

What if we worked w/ Christian colleges/seminaries to offer a 3-6 mo. hands-on internship to give these men/women real world ministry experience so when they finish school they might actually have some clue about how to do ministry?

What if we worked w/ NAMB, IMB, and OM to provide a 12-18 mo. apprenticeship for people being called to plant or revitalize churches or go into the mission field offering them ministry exposure (like a med. student going thru rotations) to learn about working w/ children, students, adults, worship, leadership, and teaching. Then once they complete the apprenticeship and launch into their ministries – we partner w/ them to send people/resources to walk alongside of them until they reach a point of sustainability? **This is just some of the things we could do if our church were unleashed in our hearts and untethered from our indebtedness.**

Like I said last week – if we could relieve our debt and turn our hearts and blessings to the Father – we could take the \$1.2 mil. saved in interest and the \$300K per year in payment and turn it to such opportunities.

To happen – we have to embrace we're not just some small, insignificant church caring for us (4) and no more – but we are a church who's been given much – and much is required.

As I said at the start – **let's take this bad boy for a spin!**