



Message Transcript

Godâ€™s Powerful Orchestration

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We love to see organizations and teams come together with great success. If we're talking about a team, we love to see a team that comes together and all of a sudden, all the parts continue to fire as one, and the team wins a championship, and we love to see that. We love to see it when an organization comes together and does something with excellence. We love it if we're in drama, when a team comes together and puts on a play and it's outstanding, we love all of that, but sometimes we wonder, okay, who's really leading this? And is that person that's leading it that important? How important is the coach to the football team, or how important is the conductor to the orchestra?

I was talking to some of our members that are in orchestra. And I was asking that question this week, I'm like, is the conductor really that important? Because when I've gone and seen an orchestra, they're passionate, they're flying around, but I think could I just be up there flailing and all those people are good enough, it wouldn't matter anyway? And they said, no, they're super important. And here's why, because they've spent time training each of us, what our part needs to sound like. And they've brought different instruments out and tone different instruments down, and they're bringing enthusiasm for the whole room. And what's going on that you can't see while the orchestra's playing is they're reminding us of everything that he's been teaching us all along. So it comes together as a whole. And for those of you that like the symphony you'll know that when it all gets put together and all those individual instruments come together, there's a wow factor in when it happens.

But the same is true spiritually. For many of us as Christians, we ask this

question all the time. What's God's purpose for my life? Why am I here? What should I be doing? What shouldn't I be doing? I'm frustrated with the whole thing. How do you really know? And today I wanted to talk to you about the greatest orchestrator that's ever been. He's the God of the universe. And he's orchestrated everything in your life, just for what you need that not only is for you, but fits a collective hole that makes this world a better place. We read in Psalm 139, that every life is fearfully and wonderfully made, that God put that life together in your mother's womb. And he knit you together in such a way where you're unique. In Ephesians 2:10, it says that you are God's workmanship. That means you're his masterpiece. We're his masterpiece created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

It means this, God created you. He gave you all your strengths. He gave you all your weaknesses. God's decided on the amount of days that you're going to live. And God has orchestrated according to Acts 17, the very times in which you're going to live. So God has destiny and purpose for you. And yet for many of us, we wonder, okay, what is it? Let me in on it. I just want to know. If you've ever wanted to know how God wants to use your life or how God is using your life in a special way, I believe that God has a word for you today. I want to encourage you to open your Bibles up to Exodus chapter two. And as you're turning to Exodus chapter two, I want to remind you of where we've been. Because in Exodus one, we saw the Israelites in plight, in slavery. And the more they began to serve God, the more difficult it became for them. As a matter of fact, the Pharaoh made their labor harder.

And as we left off in chapter one, you'll remember that because of the Pharaoh's great fear of Israel, what he decided to do was to tell the Hebrew midwives, hey, when the Hebrew ladies give birth, if it's a baby girl, let her live. If it's a boy, kill it, throw it in the Nile. Drown that baby. They didn't listen. So he made an edict to the entire nation, letting them know that when the baby girls were born, okay, but when the baby boys were born, they're to be drowned. That's where our story left off. It looks bleak.

Sometimes in our life situations look bleak, don't they? Sometimes we look around our world and we say, it looks bleak, it looks hopeless. The government doesn't seem to be on God's side. They're not helping us. The educational system doesn't seem to be on our side, it's not helping us. Look at our economy, it's not as strong as it... We see all these things in the news and then we begin to think, where is God?

Have you ever wondered where is God? I got good news for you. He's as alive as he's ever been, and he's still orchestrating all of the events that are taking place. And so when our story leaves off last week, it's left us in a bleak place. And so we get to Exodus chapter two, God has told us through his word that when baby boys are born there are to be killed, that is how chapter two starts off. Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a daughter of Levi. The Levites were the priestly house that led the worship. It said the woman conceived and bore a son. And when she saw that he was beautiful she hid him for three months.

Now it doesn't mean that when the baby was born, she saw him, and if he was ugly, she was going to discard of him. It means she saw him and she's like, it's a boy.

It's my boy. It's like every mother, when they see their child for the first time, this is my son, or this is my daughter. When she saw the child, she had to hide him. Why did she have to hide him? Because all baby boys were to be killed. She knew she had to hide him. She hid him for three months. Why? Because even though the government said, you should kill your boy. She says, this is my son. God gave me this son. I'm hiding him. So she hides him for three months and notice verse three. But when she could hide him no longer. Babies grow don't they? Babies make sounds. Babies are difficult to hide. When she could hide him no longer, she got a wicker basket and covered it over with tar and pitch. Then she put the child into it and set it among the reeds by the bank of the Nile.

Now covering this in tar and pitch is the same pitch that was used to create the arc. When Noah created the arc, he covered it in tar and pitch, which saved them from the waters. This is the same type of thing that's happening here. This wicker basket's being covered because it's going to save him from the water. Why? Because Moses was to be dumped into the water. Instead, he's going to be protected from it. They put him in the banks of the Nile. And it says this, that Moses's sister, his older sister stood at a distance to find out what would happen to him.

Now, providentially here's what happens in verse five. Notice what happens. The daughter of Pharaoh, the one who's issued the edict that all baby boys should be killed. She came down to bathe at the Nile, with her maidens walking alongside Nile. And she, the Pharaoh's daughter, saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid. And she brought it to her. So providentially, here's what happens. Moses's mother decides, got

to save my son. There's no way I can hide him anymore. She takes a wicker basket, covers it in tar, places him in the Nile so that it's floating among the bank, among the reeds. And there he is. And just so happens that at that time Pharaoh's daughter comes down to bathe, her maidens are walking along the shore while she takes her bath. She sees the basket she says, bring that to me.

So, that's exactly what happened. They brought it to her. And in verse six, when she opened it, she saw the child and behold, the boy was crying. Now, do you think that Pharaoh's daughter is aware of the edict that her dad has made for the entire nation for Hebrew boys? 100% she is. So she opens this basket. She sees this boy, what should she do if she's going to obey her dad? Take the basket and turn it upside down and let him float to his death. But that's not what happens. It says when she opened it, she saw the child and behold, the boy was crying and she had pity. That's the word compassion. That means she saw a need and she's going to do something about it. Jesus lived with pity. He lived with compassion. When he saw a need, he did something about it.

She said, this is one of the Hebrew children. She knew who it was. She knew what the laws of the land were and yet she says this, this is one of the Hebrews children. Then his sister. Moses's older sister, who's been standing on the banks said to Pharaoh's daughter, shall I go call a nurse for you from the Hebrew women that she may nurse the child for you? Pharaoh's daughter said to her, go ahead. So the girl went and called the child's mother. Do you see the irony here? Moses's mother sets Moses in the bank because after three months she can't hide him anymore. The

Pharaoh's daughter comes to bathe. The one who's the daughter of the king who's issued the edict to kill all the baby boys. She sees the basket, says, what is this? They bring her the basket. She opens it up. She sees the baby boy crying and said, this is a Hebrew baby boy. At which time Moses' sister over here says, hey, shall I go call one of the Hebrew women to nurse him?

She says, yeah, that'd be a good idea. So she goes and says, mom, can you nurse my brother? Is God providential or what? Now, check this out. It gets even better. It gets even better. You can't clap just yet. Okay. Then Pharaoh's daughter said, take this child away and nurse him for me and I will give you your wages. So the woman took the child and nursed him. Moses' sister says, mom, come here, mom, come. She's like, hey, can you nurse this boy? She says, yeah. She's like, okay, I'll pay you to do that. So not only is his life going to be spared and Moses' mother is the one who's going to nurse him, but she's going to get paid to do that. And Moses is going to be with her until he is weaned, which at that time would've been about the age of three or four. So the mother is going to get to pour into him, everything for those first three years.

And all of us know if you studied anything about raising children, those first years have so much to do with the development of a child. And here Moses's mother is the one that's going to get to do that. And it says in verse 10, the child grew and she brought him, this is awesome. She brought him to Pharaoh's daughter and he became her son and she named him Moses, because she said, I drew him out of the water. Moses literally means to draw out of the water. Pharaoh's daughter is now claiming a

Hebrew boy as her own son. Do you see any irony here? Here's the first thing you need to understand that God orchestrates the unique pathway for your purpose. God always orchestrates the unique pathway for your purpose. Now, check this out. When we left off, we saw what Satan was doing. He was trying to kill all the baby boys. Let me just tell you something about Satan. Satan can never, ever stop the work of God. Did you know that?

No matter who Satan tries to influence, Satan never has the last word. Satan can't stop the work of God. God is sovereignly at work all the time. Now check this out. I love this. The king feared the Hebrews so much that he made an edict to the Hebrew midwives saying, you have to kill all your baby boys when they're born. They didn't listen. So he made an edict to the nation that said all Hebrew baby boys that are born need to be killed. That's where our story left off. It's bleak. The government is against Israel. God says, really? That's the way you want to play it. Okay. God orchestrated in such a way that he said, not only will a Hebrew boy be born to lead, but you will raise him in your own house. Is God awesome or what? It's interesting that this king is so fearful that the Hebrews are going to rise up and turn against him, that he wants all the boys to be killed. And so God says, seriously, that's the way you want to play? I'm going to let him be raised in your house.

The very one that's going to deliver them all, you're going to raise him. You're going to feed him. You're going to take care of him. You're going to be the one that provides for them. That's how God works. God is always working to orchestrate the

pathway for your purpose. It means this. Who are you born to? What blessings were you given? What things didn't you have? What things did you have to struggle for? God brought you into this world with the parents he gave you, at the time he gave you for good, bad, or indifferent, all because he's using all of that for your purpose and your destiny. And yet for many of us, because we compare ourselves to this idealistic, here's what it means to be a perfect Christian world. That we look at other people and we say, well, I didn't have these parents. And I didn't have these teachers. And I didn't have these coaches and I didn't have this. And God must have forgot about me. And how come I'm not going to ever be like them because... That's the wrong way to view it.

If you view it from God's perspective, God gave you everything you need to fulfill the destiny he has for you. Is that good news or what? God has providentially brought you into this world and he says this, as he looks at each one of you. You're my masterpiece. When I created you, I was up in heaven saying, whoa, check this out. He made you male, or he made you female. He brought you into the world the way that he wanted you to be in the world, to create you. And the first part of your life are those formative years that he was forming things for you to be able to see the world clearly through your lens. And the older you get, and the more you look back on it, the more you'll realize that was God. And instead of complaining for maybe what you didn't have, if you start thanking God for what you did have, you'll see things with that lens and you'll give praise to God for what he did.

My mom tells a story all the time about how, when I was five years old, had a

choice to go to public school down the street or a Lutheran grade school down the street the other way. And my mom said she had prayed and prayed and we didn't go to a Lutheran churchman, we went to a Methodist church, which meant they would have to pay tuition to send me to this Lutheran school. And wouldn't know it, they didn't have any room. I was on a wait list. And on the Thursday before school started on a Monday, right before kindergarten, the principal called my mom and said, Mrs. Schwarzentraub, if you'd like to enroll your son, we have one space available for him to go to our school. And my mom prayed about it with my dad, and they placed me in that school.

Now for me, I look back and say, when I was five years old, one of my favorite classes was religion class. One of my favorite things to do was learn Bible verses. That's where my theological education began at the age of five. Was that an accident or was God providentially moving on my parents' heart to place me in a school where I could begin my theological education at the age of five. I think it was the latter. When I think back about my parents, my mom, who is the most driven person that I know who told me, I could do everything. Just go live your dreams. And my dad, who is the most shepherding kind laid back person I know, God used both of them in my life in different seasons to help grow who I was. And guess where I was born? You probably all want to visit there on your next vacation, Peoria, Illinois. I'm sure it's on your list.

It's really interesting, because when I study my history and I know what Peoria, Illinois is like, it's not a place that you're going to want to come visit. You might drive through it sometime if you're on interstate 74 and that's about it, but here's what I can

tell you about it. It's a test market for everything. Before any company sends out a product, they always bring it to Peoria first. They say, if you can play in Peoria, you can play anywhere. And the reason they say stuff like that is as I think back about my neighborhood, we had the Lutheran family across the street, the Catholic family [inaudible 00:15:11] corner, the Jews right next to us, we went to a Methodist church. There were Democrats, there were Republicans, there were independents. Everybody thought different about everything. And yet we all played baseball together and all got along.

You know what that taught me at a young age? You don't have to think like everybody else, and you can still be civil towards people.

Amen.

Isn't that interesting? That's where I grew up. That's how God taught me some of those lessons. As I grew and God used me as an evangelist. I've been in every kind of church you can imagine y'all. I've been in Pentecostal churches where after the service people are slaying in the spirit, they're falling down. They're covering them up. If women are wearing dresses, so you can't look up their dress. I've been in churches where they don't believe the holy spirit really exists anymore, even though they say that it.... I've been in every kind of church, big, small, whatever. And here's what I see. There are genuine people in almost every church that love the Lord, Jesus Christ. Why has God given me that experience? Because he wanted me to see the world clearly through my lens.

What has God done with you? You see the world clearly through your lens.

There's certain things that rise up in you because of your foundation. And God is the one that orchestrated that. And God is the one that's wanting to use that. Why was it that Moses was born a Jew in a time where baby boys shouldn't even live and then be raised in Pharaoh's house? Could it be that God had a plan for his life, that he was trying to build something into Moses for a greater purpose than Moses even knew? 100% yes. And the reality is he's done the same in your life. Christian, listen to me, instead of complaining about the hurts and the pains and the heartaches that you went to, start thanking God that he was sovereignly working through all those, to give you a crystal clear lens, that's going to help in your destiny to help other people see things clearly the way that you do. Amen.

And this is what I think too. I think back, was God using Moses at his birth? Was God doing something significant in him? Was God doing something in me at the age of five? Yeah. So please don't tell me that God doesn't use kids' ministry, or God doesn't use student ministry. Most of the people that will come to Christ will do so before the age of 13, is it important that we pour the life of Christ into our young people? 100%. Absolutely. Yes, because God is already starting that work. He's done it in your life. However old you are, that's when he started the work in your life. When he was knitting you together in your mother's womb and he was orchestrating a pathway for your purpose. Chapter two verses one through 10 in the book of Exodus give me goosebumps. What the world says won't happen, and God says, oh yeah, watch this. Let me show you how awesome I am.

When the world says that you won't be something, God says, oh, oh, I created you for divine purpose. I put you in all the circumstances that I put you in because I have a pathway for your purpose. God orchestrates the unique pathway for your purpose. Number two is this, God orchestrates the unique design for your calling, then a unique design for your calling. Notice verse 11. Now we're fast forwarding about 36 or 37 years here. Moses is about the age of 40 when this takes place. Now sometimes we read the Bible like, well, what happened? Where'd he go to grade school and where'd he go to high school? And what kind of grades did he get? We ask the same questions about Jesus and we don't get a lot of information about his childhood. Luke and Matthew tell us about his birth and that's about it, then he's 30. And the other two gospels he starts at 30. Why? Because the Bible wants to highlight what's most significant.

Someday when we get to heaven, we can ask Moses about his education in Pharaoh's home, but the Bible is not as concerned with that than it is with telling us about what was going on in his heart at the age of 40, notice, verse 11. It says now it came about in those days when Moses had grown up that he went out to his brethren, notice how it talks about Israel, the Hebrews as his brothers, and looked on their hard labors. And he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren. It's repeating it here. Moses looked on their hard labor and here's why he looked on it because he wasn't a slave, he was living in the palace. He knew he had been born a Hebrew. His mom for the first three or four years of his life was rooting into him all that he was as a child of God, all that he was as a child of Yahweh, who was the God that their family

serve. He understood Israel to be his brethren.

And he comes out at the age of 40 and he sees all the slavery, and here's what he notices on that specific day. There's an Egyptian beating a Hebrew and he views that as if you're beating one of his very own brother. So notice what happens next, verse 12, it says, so he looked this way and that. Now that doesn't mean he was learning to cross the street and was doing like this and this, it means he was looking around to see if anybody else looking because of what I'm about ready to do, because I'm going to take this guy out. And notice, sir, he looked this way and that when he saw there was no one around, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. So what'd he do? He has on his heart that he's a deliverer, even though he's still walking in the flesh and he's not doing it God's way. He strikes down the Egyptian and then he realizes uh-oh I just killed an Egyptian. That's not good. So what's he do? He buries him in the sand. How good's that going to work?

How many of you know that the Bible says that your sin will find you out? Even when you try to cover up your sin, it still comes up. I've had my kids ask me from time to time, we'll be talking about something they'll say this, dad, what if you never find out about it? At which time I'll lay my hand on whatever kid said that. And I'll say, dear Jesus, I pray that whatever sin my child, sins, that you would make it known to not only me, but everybody in authority over them. And they hate that prayer. But the fact is you can't hide your sin because it's like a beach ball under the water. You can put it down for a while, but eventually it's going to come up. So Moses kills the Egyptian, hides him in the sand. It's not going to go well, notice what happens next.

It says this in verse 13, he went out the next day and behold two Hebrews were fighting with each other and he said to the offender, why are you striking your companion? Now two Hebrews are fighting. He's like guys, guys. We're brothers. We're family. Why are you doing this to one another? But the one turned and said to him, who made you a prince, or judge over us? Are you intending to kill me as you killed the Egyptian? Then Moses was afraid and said, surely this matter has become known. So he goes out, he sees two Hebrews fighting the next day. And he is like, hey, we're on the same team here. Why are you guys fighting with each other. Parents telling your kids, why are you fighting with each other, we're family. Why are we fighting with each other? We're in the church together. Why are we fight? We're we're together. And what's he get back? Who made you prince or judge over us?

Can I just tell you this? Sometimes other people see your divine calling before you ever see it in yourself. Moses was a prince. Moses was a judge. Moses is a deliverer. Moses is a divine ruler, even though Moses doesn't know that he is. Other people see it and he's acting like that. He's walking out his calling, but he's doing it in the flesh at that time. He's not doing it according to the will of God. And that's when he begins to fear and says, surely this matter has become known. Here's what I would say to you. Sometimes other people see in you what God's doing in your life long before you see it. Pay attention to what other people see in you, pay attention to what other people ridicule in you. Because oftentimes those are the things that are coming out and coming up on the surface that have always been there.

When I look back on my life from the time I was a kid until now, and even through now, the times I get most in trouble in my life, the times where I'm most prone to sin is when I'm using my tongue or my leadership in a way that's not submitted to the spirit. I remember my dad tells a story when I was seven years old, I was over at a friend's house and his dad had just planted a tree and every night would come home and watch the leaves on the tree. And apparently, and I don't remember this, but it's probably true. Apparently I went out and tore all the leaves off the tree when I was at my friend's house and his dad came and talked to me apparently. And all I remember is what my dad tells me about the story, that when that dad went and talked to my dad, here's what he said to my dad. He said, your son, Jeff should be an attorney someday.

I was so mad at him, but by the time I got done talking to him, it seemed like he had a really good reason to tear the leaves off my tree. My grandma tells a story about when I was four, my cousin was eight. She took us on a 40 minute drive to the mall and a 40 minute drive back. And she said, Jeff, you talked the whole time there and the whole way back, and nobody said a word and you never, ever shut up. Could it be that my divine calling was to use my mouth in some way. And that's what God does. We pay attention to how God's using us. It's not like we have to go looking around the world and try to make these big moves in our life. Who you are is how he's always been using you. It just needs to be submitted to the spirit.

Moses is going to be used as an incredible deliverer, but at this point in time, he's doing it in his flesh. Pay attention to how you sinned in the past. It doesn't excuse your sin. It doesn't mean sin's okay. It just means that in your gifting, there's probably

certain areas when you're not submitted to the spirit or filled with the spirit that you sin in such a way. To this day, I can still get in trouble for speaking when I shouldn't speak, when I'm responding in my flesh, when I need to go back and pray and let the spirit of God surround me and control me. And then I can come back and be measured in what I say, or in leadership, or I'm making a harsh decision or a rash decision where I would do better to come back and allow the spirit of God to work with me on what's the best way. What's the best timing on that, but make no mistake about it. Sometimes other people see it in you before you see it in yourself.

I look back on my life and I remember different times in different parts of my life, whether it was friends of mine or spiritual mentors or girls that I dated that would say things like this. I think you might be called into the ministry to which my response 100% of the time was, I'm not doing that. I can guarantee I'm not doing that. There's no way I'm doing that. I remember when I was a senior at the University of Illinois, our campus crusade for Christ director invited me to a conference that took place between Christmas and New Year's in Indianapolis. And I didn't want to go, and so I told him this, if we don't go to a bowl game this year, which we had gone four years in a row, I'll go with you. Knowing that it was certain, we go to a bowl game. And then that was a nice way of saying, I don't want to go. We missed going to a bowl game by one game and guess who came knocking on my door? And I'm like, okay, fine. I'll go.

So I went to this conference. Now you need to understand, I didn't go to a church where the Bible was preached and I hadn't really been under Bible teaching. So I didn't

understand how the Lord works through his word when it's proclaimed. I didn't understand that the holy spirit can get a hold of the word and apply it to your heart in a way that's specific for you. And I remember sitting somewhere out in here and every speaker that came up for those three days, I felt like they had pulled into a back closet, told them all about my life and said, now go preach to Jeff, because I felt like every message was for me to go into ministry.

And I was offended and I was trying to fight it for the whole three days. And at the end of the conference, they didn't show a video. How many remember what slides were? Remember what slides were? Had a slide show put to music. And it went in and out with different slides. And it was all to the song by a gal named Twila Paris that quoted Jim Elliot, the famous missionary to the Aka Indians who died his first day on the field by these head hunters who then eventually people went in and wives went in and others went in and a bunch of people got saved. And he was quoted as saying, "He is no fool if he would choose to give the thing he cannot keep to buy the thing he can never lose." And the song to this day still grips me. When I listen to it, I can still get choked up and cry, but they were doing it that day. And God was speaking to me the whole time, Jeff, this is what I've designed your life to be.

And I started to cry, shoulders shaking, trying to hold it together. It was dark in the room. And I could tell, as soon as the slideshow was coming to an end, I started drying my eyes, composing myself and my buddy that I had led to the Lord, I played football with looked over at me when it was done he said, "Yo dawg, what'd you think of that?" And I said, "It's all right. It's pretty good." And he's like, "Well, what do you

think God's saying?" And I made the mistake of telling him, I think God's calling me into ministry. And he said, "Yo dawg, I've been telling you that for six months," he goes, "When are you going to submit to the call of God on your life?" And I was like, shut up. So he went and got our campus crusade for Christ director who promptly read to me first Corinthians three, assuring me I'd be saved to the full, but I would lose all my rewards if I didn't submit to Christ.

So I went up to our hotel room to get away from both of them. And he came storming in like, "Dude, what are you going to do, man? When God speaks, you got to make a decision. You got to make a decision now." So I went into the bathroom because I knew he wouldn't follow me in there. And I knelt down by the commode and this is how I prayed, "Dear Jesus. I love you. Thank you for your salvation in my life. I will do whatever you want me to do with my life. I will serve in the church. I will preach and teach, but I am never now, nor ever doing full-time Christian ministry. Amen." And I stood up and left and it was good. But every day for about the next six months, the Lord just continued to impress upon my heart. This is what I've called you to do.

And unfortunately for me, my only view of ministry was somebody who wore a clerical robe like a dress and liked old women, because I was 24 and I'm like, I thought that was the qualification. You have to wear a dress and like older women. And I'm like, that's not me. And God finally showed me, he said, hey, if you can just be you and tell other people about me, that's all I'm asking. And I said, I can do that and surrender my call to ministry. But God's using all sorts of different things in your life and all sorts of people in your life to help you understand what that is.

Before that time, I remember I spoke, I've told you this story. I spoke at a Fellowship of Christian Athletes banquet down in Tampa. We were playing Clemson at a bowl game the year earlier. And they were asking for a couple guys on our team who would give testimony and I've volunteered. I said, I'll do that. I've never done that before. And it was at a breakfast. So I was looking forward to the 30 people that were going to be there at this breakfast for the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. And so that morning we walked in and it was a banquet hall every bit as big as this with five or 600 people and my heart began to race and I was like, I'm not good at this. To make matters worse, the head coach at Clemson stood up. He was hilarious and funny. Both his players told great stories. Then they had the guy from our team stand up. I can still remember the allegory he told about the gospel and he got done everybody was like, that guy's awesome.

And it was about that time that they said, now we're going to hear from Jeff Schwarzentraub. And I was like, great. So I walked to the podium and I didn't know how to publicly speak. So I started off with a joke and out of 500 people, I heard one person in the back go like this. So, that made me nervous. And then I spoke really fast and I gave my testimony and I sat down and I was flush. And I remember thinking to myself, I will never ever do public speaking, and I certainly won't ever give my testimony again. I'm done. That's the last time ever.

And we were on the bus ride going back to our hotel and the starting center who was three years older than me, who had never really talked to me, came and sat by

me on the bus. And he said this, he's like, he goes, I just got to tell you something. He goes, you got to understand something. Today when I heard all the other speakers, they're good speakers, but when you spoke about Jesus, there was something different in the room. And I'm just telling you, you need to do that more often. You're really good at that. That spoke to my heart. You have to pay attention to what other people are saying. Sometimes people will tell you, you can't and other times people will tell you that you can. And that's what God's doing to build something inside of you. You're designed for your calling. He's the one that put it there.

And you don't have to figure out what it is. Every one of us tends to be, because we're American, we want to be on the platform or we want to be this, or we got these grandiose ideas, but we don't think that way when it comes to buying a car. If we were all different parts of a car, and I'm not an expert on cars, but I know there are different parts that make it up. Everybody wants to be the steering wheel or the engine, but maybe you're the spark plug that brings the encouragement. Maybe you're the gas line that everybody's relying on to get the fuel to where it needs to go. Maybe you're a tire that can be dependable when otherwise the car's not going to move, or you're the chair that provides comfort for those that are sitting in it. Everybody plays a different role and problem is sometimes we want to play a different role.

Paul uses the human body as an analogy. Everyone wants to be the head. Jesus Christ is the head, that position's already taken. Well, then I want to be the right arm. I want to be the left arm. I want to be this. I want to be the mouthpiece. I want to be... But isn't it true that the organs inside of us that we can't see are more valuable than

the ones outside of us? You can live without an arm or a leg. You can't live without a heart. And that's what the Lord is showing us that he's created you for something special. And when you're plugged into your purpose and you're doing what God wants, there's great joy in it, there's great freedom in it, and other people are being blessed by it. Moses was called to be a deliverer. He was called to be a prince. And chances are whatever you're called to do is not necessarily something that you want to do.

Here's the deal, Moses hears what's going on. Moses knows his sin has found him out. Moses doesn't know yet. We know from the story that he's going to stand up to the Pharaoh, but not yet. Guess what he's doing right now? He's going to go on a run, he's going to get away because in his flesh, he's not able to stand for what God is going to have him do. He's not ready for it yet. He's 40 years old. He's still not ready for his calling and he's going to take off, but make no mistake about it. God orchestrates the unique pathway for your purpose. He orchestrates the unique design for your calling. Number three is this, God orchestrates the unique obstacles for your growth. God orchestrates the unique obstacles for your growth. Check it out. We wouldn't really know who David is if there was no Goliath, would we?

Goliath is a huge part of that story. We wouldn't really understand how powerful Moses is until we see what's going to happen to the Pharaoh. There's always going to be obstacles and people who are opposing you in your calling and in your destiny. And it's the way that God helps you to grow. Notice verse 15, when Pharaoh heard this matter, he tried to kill Moses, but Moses fled from the presence of Pharaoh and settled in the land of Midian and he sat down by a well. Let me make no mistake about

it, you will be opposed, even when you get to the place like God, okay, whatever it is, I'll do whatever you want. I'm going to go your way. And you start stepping in that way. There will be opposition to it.

I've seen it happen in the church. I'm going to get more involved in the church. God's shown me, I got to help with kids. And two weeks into kids ministry, you're like, this is not nearly as fun as I thought it was going to be. I'm going to lead a small group, I know that's what God's calling me to do. And it just turns out that the small group that you're leading doesn't seem to be nearly as excited about it as you are. There's always opposition wherever there's a step in the direction that God wants you to go. And it's nothing to fear, it's the way God starts growing your spiritual muscle. That's what he's doing. And that's how he does it. So Moses is running away. He's going to go sit down by a well. And oftentimes in our lives, we sometimes forget that this is true. The enemy's placing obstacles in our life, God's allowing them to be placed into our lives so that we'll see the call of God on our life.

Years after I'd gone into ministry, I've served in a couple of different churches, went to seminary, which I said I would never do. I remember when I graduated from college, I told my mom that is the last class I will ever take in my entire life. I didn't even go to graduation, I was so ticked. And then subsequently did 10 more years of higher education after that. God has a way of doing that. But I remember when I graduated from Dallas Seminary and I finished up student ministry, God put a calling on my heart back in 2002 and said, I want you to plant a church. It was one of the clearest times that the Lord had spoken to me. I knew his voice. I was acquainted with

his voice. I got invited to go to Little Rock, Arkansas and be part of an amazing church. And I was one of four residents in the country to get to do it. Was super excited to go, super excited as to what God was going to unveil for this church that he was going to have me plant and move to Little Rock, Arkansas.

Have you ever had a season in your life where everything falls apart when you're following God? That was my season. I left it all in Little Rock. I was dating a girl I was engaged to, broke the engagement off, was the right decision, but was going through a lot of turmoil and pain. I was asking questions in their residency that I couldn't get answers to. And because of the questions I was asking that were genuine questions, I was considered the black sheep of it. I would ask questions like this. I'm like, I get that you guys are excited about all this church stuff, but why do you guys want to go pastor in a place where the same people are going to sit in the same seats and do absolutely nothing for the next 30 years, so you can get a paycheck and pat yourself on the back? They didn't like that question. And I was asking all sorts of questions like this. Do you even the music that you're singing, do people actually even worship, or is it just religion? I don't want to direct a YMCA. I want to see life change.

All those kind of questions. I remember one day I was asking one of those questions and one of the guys looked from across the table and he is like, hey bro, I think you need to consider that maybe you're not even called to the ministry. Stung. And I remember going home and asking the Lord, okay, Lord, if you're not calling me there, I'll do whatever you want. It was shortly thereafter, they were kind to me. I

remember sitting down with our supervisor in January of that year and he was explaining to me, hey, if you're not going to continue to plant a church, probably best for you to move on and we don't need to pay you a stipend. And if you really love Little Rock and want to be part of this program, maybe you could go to Home Depot and get a job. It was an all time lowest conversation in my life. I can't even screw in a light bulb, let alone work at Home Depot. And I didn't want to live in Little Rock anymore.

And he was kind, he didn't mean it rude. It was just, that's where we were. I'm like, this is what my life's come to. Lord, I'm following you in ministry and I'm asked if I want to work at Home Depot. So I moved back home and I was telling the Lord, I'll do whatever you want, but I'm just not sure this is what I want to do. And I had all these opportunities start coming. One of them was business and professional speaking. I got invited to go speak to a group of British Petroleum. And I'm like, well, what do I do? And they're like, well, just come and just motivate us. And so I did, they said just one hour talk and the people called me on the phone, they said, what do you charge? I said, I don't know. I've never done it. So I called my mentor and I said, well, what do I tell him? He goes, just tell him a thousand bucks. He goes, that'll be nothing. I'm like a thousand bucks for an hour? He's like, they won't even think about it. Just trust me. So I said, okay.

So they called me back, said, how much do you want? I said a thousand dollars. They said, fine. Do you want one night or two at the hotel? And I told them and went and did the thing. They loved me. I had ministry opportunities all over the place. They came afterwards and they said, listen, we feel like we robbed you. You're the

cheapest guy we've ever had and you're really good. So we're going to send you another \$4,000 and here's playoff tickets for the Cubs. And I was like, I like this gig. So as I was doing that, I was talking to my mentor and I said, could I do stuff like this? And he was working with executives at State Farm. And he said, Jeff, let me just tell you. We just had a woman in this last week. She charged \$15,000 for her morning training. And if she's worth 15, you're worth 30. And I'm like, you're telling me I can make \$30,000 in a morning? Where do I sign?

But as I went back and prayed about it, the Lord continued to birth this thing in me, no, no, you got to preach the word. You got to preach the word. And God made it crystal clear. And I remember sitting down with them and instead of taking the job, I said, hey instead, will you just support me every single month with money so I can go preach the gospel? And that's what God did. God always puts obstacles or seemingly good things like single people you know what it's like. You know you're not supposed to date the person you're dating and you break up with them. And then they look so good the next day. This is like, did I make a mistake? Or all those kind of things. Or you get engaged and God gives you this opportunity, or you take this job that you've been praying about forever. And right after you take the job, here's another one that got offered that looks even better.

That's why you have to spend time with the Lord, there'll always be obstacles and opposition in your way, sometimes directly from people and sometimes just for the things that your heart runs after without the Lord. Now here's the interesting thing. If you pursue the Lord, God makes all this stuff clear. If you pursue the Lord, it's just a

daily step. He makes it all clear. I remember, as I was going through this time, you guys know my pastor, Pastor Cal. He was preaching one day, I was at church with my wife. We were sitting back in the back and he was talking about how sometimes God chooses some of your areas of brokenness and your wounds to be what he's going to minister out of. And he had us think for a minute. What are those areas in your life that are just hurtful to you, that haven't been any good? And I started walking through them like, well, it's not my dad. I'm close to my dad. And I love my mom. And I love my family, and Kim and I are good. It seems like everything's pretty fine.

And all of a sudden I heard the holy spirit say, what about the church? And then all this stuff started coming up for serving in the church for a number of years, hurts and heartaches and all this stuff. And right, as I was thinking church, he said, whatever you're thinking about right now, that's probably where the Lord may have you serve for the rest of your life. I could not get out of that service fast enough. And it was shortly thereafter that I ran into Kent Shaw. It was eight years after I'd made the decision to move to Little Rock, eight years after I'd heard the clear call of God on my life to plant a church, met him and started talking about stuff. And his first question to me was, have you ever considered planting a church? And my answer was 57 minutes of yes I have. And no, I never will. And he said, well, here's what you'd be looking to do.

And he started spelling out what God was doing in my life. And I said, if you're telling me the truth, if you're telling me the truth, I'll give the rest of my life to do that. And I looked at my wife, because we were in the car and I started crying. I said, we're moving to Denver, Colorado and plant a church. And Kim in typical fashion said, okay.

And we were walking into a conference that night and, or a concert that night. And I said to her, no, God told me we're doing this. And she said, well, you didn't say that God said, I'm like, well, I'm telling you now. And we walked through it together. And God brought us together in that journey. And we moved out here and this is where God has me in this season. If we plan on what we're going to do and tell God where we're going to go, we miss out.

God's the one that's orchestrating all the different things. And the reality is if you could hit a rewind switch on your life, there are so many things that you would rewind to and say, taking another fork in the road there, taking an ex. I know this is going to be bad. I know this isn't... God says, I didn't want you to take the fork in the road. Even the tragedy that's happened in your life. And even the hurt that's happened in your life. And even the things that you can't even explain if you tried to in your life, I am using that for a greater good that you don't even see. God is the one that builds all the obstacles for our growth. Third is this. God orchestrates all the curriculum for your character. He's the one that orchestrates all the curriculum for your character. Notice in verse 16, it says now the priest of Midian had seven daughters and they came to draw water and filled the troughs to water their father's flock. Then the shepherds came and drove them away. But Moses stood up and helped them water the flock.

Now check this out. This doesn't seem like a very interesting part of the story, but seven sisters are out there watering their flock. To water their flock, you got to draw water. It takes time to send it down the well and draw it all the way up and then

take it to one of the animals and feed the animal, and then take it back when it's empty and do a... It's a long process. And while they're doing it, some shepherds came and drive them away. But guess what? Moses is there. Who's Moses? Moses is a righteous man. He's a deliverer. He's going to stand firm. He wouldn't let the shepherds treat them badly. He made sure that the shepherds treated the women with respect. And so what happens is after the shepherds came and drove them away, Moses stood up and helped them.

And when the girls go back to their dad in verse 18, when they came to Raul, their father, he said, why have you come back so soon today? And they said to him, an Egyptian delivered us from the hand of the shepherds and what is more, he even drew the water for us and water to the flock. In other words, he did all the work. So he says to his daughters, where is he then? You get what's going on. They go back. He's like, why are you back so soon? Well, the shepherds came and drove us away, but there was this guy. He's an Egyptian. He stood with us. He drove the shepherds away. He drew all the water. He fed all the herds. It was awesome. That's why we're back so soon. And the dad looks and says, well, where is he? Sounds like a good guy. I need to meet him.

And here's what happens. Why is it you've left the man behind, invite him to have something to eat, at least give him a meal. And so what happens is Moses was willing to dwell with the man. And he gave his daughter Zipporah to Moses. Then she gave birth to his son and he named him Gershom, for he said, I have been a sojourner in a foreign land. So Moses gets invited into this family. And Moses is given the oldest

child. Now, Raul, you'll see his name as the book of Exodus continues, he's also called Jethro, same guy. Now, I don't know where they get the name. I guess his Hebrew name is Raul and his hillbilly name is Jethro. I've tried to figure that out all week, but that's going on. So Jethro gives Zipporah to Moses as his wife. And we'll talk more about their marriage here in a second, or in the coming weeks as to what went on with that. But at the end of the day, you see that God is using a curriculum to build his character.

Now check this out. Moses, when he goes to Midian is 40. When God calls him at the burning bush and the next chapter is to come, he's going to be 80. God's going to use 40 years to build his character in the wilderness. It means this, God may have you serve in obscurity before he elevates you to your destiny. Don't despise the small things. God may have you work out your finances on a small scale before he ever has you teach anybody else. God may have you work out your marriage on a small scale before you help anybody else. God may have you work out your parenting skills on a small scale before you help anybody else. God may have you work out your singleness on a small scale before you help anybody else. God is always working on the little thing over time in our life, that's the curriculum he's building.

We don't hear much about those 40 years. Probably wasn't a fun 40 years. Tells me something else. Some of you aren't even 40 yet, and some of you are older than 80. Moses was 80 when he's called to what God destined him to do. If you're still breathing, God still has purpose for your life. Now, I remember when I was younger, I was a heck of a lot smarter and a heck of a lot wiser, just like all of you that are older.

I realize now at 51, there's a lot of things I don't know, and there's a lot of wisdom I'm still trying to seek, but when I was 20, you should have met me. I knew everything. We live in a society where we think if I go to the right high school and I go to the right grade school, then I graduate, I'll have everything figured out. Let me tell you as a person who's wiser than you, you won't.

And schooling's only part of your curriculum. What God is doing relationally and socially and mentally and physically and spiritually, all those things are being added. And he has a unique curriculum for you that only you can learn from. That's why you have different circumstances than anybody else. You can never have my curriculum. I can never have your curriculum. God is doing something unique in each and every one of us, God's doing something unique in our church that's different than other churches. And your training is unique. And sometimes when we're in the training process where God's building our character, we just don't like it. We like people with character. We just don't like being trained so that ours grows. You think about those times in your life, where God was building your character. I know seminary was one of those times in my life where I'm studying rather than preaching, and I'm not having fun doing it, but I knew it was a season, he was trying to build something in me.

Some of us have seasons in relationships, they are difficult, but he's growing some things. We have difficulty in the workplace, but he's growing some things. And if we always run from the difficulties, our character never gets built. That's why we like movies that last two hours and we see all the character that was built in two hours and we're like, that's awesome. Some of my favorite movies are like the Karate Kid and

Miracle and Hoosiers, because in about two hours, I can sit down, see the different training elements that they had for each one, the Karate Kid I can watch wax on and wax off and paint the fence and all this stuff and what? Stand the floor. Thank you.

And Daniel's son's not getting it, but I get it, because I've seen the movie. I'm like, bro, you're going to beat him. Cobra Kai's going down. But Daniel doesn't see it, Mr. Miyagi sees it. I'm watching Miracle. When he's trying to get them to realize they're not playing for the colleges they came from, they're playing for the United States of America and they're playing a Russian team that's never been defeated. And there's a scene in there where they're doing sprints after a game on the ice, because they've decided to check out girls in the stands and not take it seriously. And you hear him blow the whistle again, again, again. And I watch that and I get all teary eyed every time I see it, because he's trying to get them to see, I will run you to death until you realize that we're coming together for something greater than you as individuals. When I see the movie Hoosiers and how all of them grew together in character from this little small town in Hickory to win the state championship. I love movies like that, because character gets built in two hours.

But in real life it takes a lot of time. And God's constantly using difficulties in our life and seasons in our lives and times in our life that don't seem to have an end to that season where we can trust God, even though I don't see the end, you're using that for my good, even though I don't see it. And that's what he was doing in Moses, and that's what he's doing in you. And then finally we get to this one, that God is uniquely

orchestrating the timing up for your destiny. God's the one that set the timeline for it. He's the one that's going to elevate you at just the right time. We really don't see the word God and the text until we get into versus 23, 24 and 25, it says now it came about in the course of those many days that the king of Egypt died and the sons of Israel's side because of the bondage and cried out, and their cry for help because of their rose up to God.

So God heard their groaning and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, God saw the sons of Israel and God took notice of them. God had been listening to him for 400 years, but apparently at this time was the right time where God was going to respond. Why? Because he had put his deliverer on the earth for the last 80 years and had built into him in such a way that he was now ready to send Moses filled with the spirit to go do what he couldn't do when he was living according to the flesh. 80 years, what if it took God 80 years for you to fulfill your calling? 80 years? We want God's calling, but we want it now. As an athlete, I was always told to be prepared so that when it came your time, or your number got called that you were ready, spiritually the same thing is true. We're called to train ourselves in godliness so that we're ready when God says it's time.

I believe God has time for BRAVE Church. I believe God's doing something special here for a destiny. I believe you're all here because we're positioning ourselves. And these last days so that if he dispenses a greater measure of his spirit for revival we'll be in a position where he can use us mightily. Now, when you hear a message like this, here's what you begin to think, because you're American. For most of you,

you're American. You start thinking about, okay, what do I do? Well, what's my next step? How do I get on this train? Matthew 6:33 tells you how, but seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be added on to you. You don't need to go looking for your destiny. Your destiny will come looking for you. All you have to do is be submitted and surrendered to God on a daily basis. And he'll do the work.

We didn't have social media during this time of history. But I believe if we did, we wouldn't have heard Moses like I'm the deliverer, I'm the king. I'm the prince. I don't even think Moses realized until after he died all the things that God was doing in and threw him. For most of us, many of us, and to some extent, all of us, we'll never know the extent that God's used us until we're with him in heaven. God doesn't give us glimpses of how we're being used, because we end up patting ourselves on the back or glorifying ourselves. We just need to know that if we're plugging into God, he's using us in ways we don't even see. That's why for some of you, your vocation's not your calling, what you do for a living's not your calling. Who you married's not your calling. It's what God's always been doing, and then through you that's your calling.

That's why in your life, you look back at different times, relationships, conversations, things that God poured out through somebody else to be a blessing to you that was their calling, they don't even know it was their calling. Don't go looking for a thing that you're calling, go looking for Jesus, who is your calling? Amen.

When I study the life of Christ, the eternal son of God, I see that God orchestrated a unique pathway for his purpose. I see that God orchestrated a specific

design for his calling as the son of God, I see that God designed specific obstacles to help him grow. Jesus was opposed all the time, wasn't he? All the way to the cross. I see that God orchestrated a unique curriculum to grow his character. Not because Jesus was sinful, but he was building in him a love for his dad that went even deeper. And then he orchestrated the specific, unique timing of his destiny that at just the right time God sent his son, at just the right time, Jesus died on a cross. At just the right time, Jesus rose from the dead. At just the right time, he dispensed the holy spirit. And guess what? At just the right time, God created you. At just the right time, God brought you into this world. At just the right time, he started building a purpose in your life. At just the right time, he started using you for his purpose.

And all he's asking from you is to spend time in his presence and to listen to him, and just take little baby step after little baby step after little baby step. And here's what the Bible says. First Thessalonians 5:24 says, he who calls you as faithful, he will surely do it. You can't miss God's call on your life if you just follow after him. It's way more simple than reading a book on 30 days to discover your purpose, or 62 days to finding the perfect job, or whatever it is. It's just today, this is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it, and let us press into Jesus today and let the spirit of God fill us today. And let's walk in the fullness of his spirit today. And if we'll do that day, after day, after day, God will see that he gets his results done in and through us. Amen. Amen.