



Message **Transcript**

Living the Life of Faith

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Last weekend, I was in Wisconsin, officiating the wedding of my really good friend's oldest daughter. And what was special about that wedding specifically was that I was there the day that she was born. I got to go into the hospital and look at her through the window, and as she grew up, I remember she was about eight, nine months old, she was learning how to walk. And I remember when she took her first steps, because she took her first steps towards me. I remembered her as a little girl. And even though I moved away before she was even two years old, I remember seeing her. And then here I was in Wisconsin watching this 26-year-old beautiful bride walk down the aisle. And I know I probably looked the same to her, but she looked different to me.

And what I realized is that she had been taking steps for all that time, even though I hadn't seen her, that she was still moving in the direction that God wanted her to go. And we've been talking about faith, and we've said from this pulpit that the hardest step of faith you will ever take is what? The next one. And that God is always wanting us to take steps of faith. So as we began chapter 11, we took a look at what is faith. And last week we took a look at what are the challenges of faith. Today, I want to talk about living the life of faith, because I find that, for many Christians, even though they may want to take a step of faith, it's hard to know what step I'm being asked to take, like how do I know what step to take?

And we think about it. Should I get engaged or not get engaged? Should I get married or not get married? Should we have kids or not have kids? Should I take this job or not? Should I retire or keep working? I mean, it's hard to know what school

should I choose? How do I do this? As parents, what are we going to do with our kids? Those are all different questions that we ask.

But today what I want to take a look at from God's word is four steps of faith you can take no matter where you're at. Wouldn't it be good to know, as you're thinking and considering about, hey, how do I go? That there are four steps of faith you can take right now today that will get you out of your rut. Because I find for a lot of Christians, as we're sitting around considering, "What's my next step of faith" that we wait and we wait and we wait and we don't take any steps because we really don't know, because we don't want to disappoint God.

Well, I have from His Word, four steps that you can take today that will not only not disappoint God, but will put you on a trajectory for the rest of your life. These are steps that you can continue to take over and over and over again, and no matter where you are in your journey, whether you're just starting with Christ or you've been walking with Him for a long time, these steps will apply to you. No matter what your circumstances right now, these steps will apply to you. If you're celebrating right now or you're mourning right now, these steps will apply to you.

And so for those who are ready to hear, "What's God's step for me? What's He want me to do?" He has a word for you today that He wants you to hear. And so to do that, we're going to be in Hebrews 11:23-29, really highlighting the life of Moses, really a nutshell of his life of faith. And I want to read to you from the Word and then we'll unpack those four steps of faith that God wants us to take. Hear the word of the Lord.

"By faith, Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents because they saw he was a beautiful child and they were not afraid of the king's edict. By faith, Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to endure ill treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward. By faith, he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king, for he endured as seeing Him who is unseen. By faith, he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood, so that he who destroyed the firstborn would not touch them. By faith, they passed through the Red Sea as though they were passing through dry land, and the Egyptians, when they attempted it, were drowned."

And here in these few short verses, as we highlight the life of Moses, we can see four steps of faith that we can begin to take, that we can begin to make, so that we can actually live the life of faith. Not just talk about it, because faith is walking without seeing. It's walking by faith and not by sight. It's putting into practice and putting into action what we say that we actually believe. So let me give you these four steps.

And the first is this, that faith presently chooses. All of these are choices that you can make. You can hear this message and choose to do nothing, or you can hear this message and choose to put these into place. But the first is this: Faith presently chooses to thank God for His providence, to thank God for His providence. Providence is God's divine providence. It's His orchestration of everything in your life. Listen to what He says. Verse 23, "By faith, Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three

months by his parents because they saw he was a beautiful child and they were not afraid of the king's edict." So, by faith, what did Moses do in verse 23? Nothing. He was born into a family that actually had faith. He didn't do anything, right? And this is what we need to realize, that no matter where you are in your life, no matter what your circumstances are, no matter who your parents are, no matter who your coaches were, your teachers were, God has divinely orchestrated everything for you.

So often we want to change our circumstances. Why did I get this mom? Why did I get this dad? Why did I have to go to this school? Why did I get that job? Why is that boss the one that spoke to me? Why did I get that coach? Because God was orchestrating something through you. He used the good in your life to teach you things about who you are, and He's used difficult things in your life to bring out things that you would only be able to bring out if you had gone through what you went through, and we need to thank God for His providence in our life. Why was Moses still alive? Because God put him in a family that had faith to make sure that he survived. God put him in a family that was not afraid of the king's edict. God put him in a family that made sure that he would continue to live.

Have you ever thanked God for His providence in your life? Have you ever been thankful, even in the circumstance you're in, maybe not for the circumstance or what's actually happening, but thanking God that He's going to use what actually is happening, not only for your good, but for the good of others, that God is orchestrating something in and through you that only He can get done in and through you. And so God

orchestrates circumstances for you. Have you ever taken time to do that? I mean some of you may be here today, "I'm a self-made man." "I'm a self-made woman." I've never seen a self-made infant.

Somebody fed you. Somebody changed your diapers. Somebody made sure that you got a start that you needed. I mean, all of us recognize, if we take the time to pause, that we've been dependent upon God bringing people into our life that we didn't know. Have you ever thanked Him for that? Some of us think that our circumstances have kept us from God's best because the enemy lies to us and says, "If you were a different skin color," or, "If you hadn't have been born in this family," or, "If you were a different race of people or different nationality," or, "You were born into wealth, or, "You weren't so poor, you would've had this, then God could."

No, God put you right where He wanted to put you, in the season that He put you because there's something special He wants to do through you. You want scriptural support for that? In Acts 17, we read about Paul, as he's on Mars hill, presenting the gospel to the Corinthians. And here's what he says, as he's writing to them and he's speaking this in the book of Acts, it says this: This is Acts 17:26. "And he made from one man, that's Adam, every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, that they would seek God. Psalm 139 says you're fearfully and wonderfully made. Psalm 139 says all of your days were ordained before one of them came to be. Your very first breath and your very last breath is already ordained by God, and you can't change that. You can change what you do in between, but you can't change what you do when

you're born or when you die.

I mean, on your tombstone, it'll have your birth date, it'll have your death date, then there'll be a little dash between it. The only thing you can change is the dash. You can't change that. It's already been set, right? So how do you live a life of faith? Because many people say, "Well, I wish I would've been born in the eighties." By the way, it was a great generation to live in by the way. Or, "I wish I was born in the fifties." Or what about the twenties? Or, "I wish I would've lived 200 years ago." "I wish I would've lived in the life of Christ." God positioned you in this season to be breathing your life now because there's a purpose He has for you today, in your generation, that only you can do. Have you ever taken time to thank God for what He's given you?

First time I ever did a solitude time, I was part of a ministry. They had us do 24 hours of solitude. It felt like a forced time. 24 hours of solitude to me felt like a year. I didn't know what to do. I asked somebody, "What can I do?" And they said, "Well, why don't you write a letter to some people that have been influential in your life and just tell them thank you? Why don't you just make a list of those people? And then you can write them a letter?" And I said, "That sounds like a good idea." I figured that would take about half an hour to an hour.

And so I sat down with a blank sheet of notebook paper, and I started writing down the left hand side all of the people that had come into my life that had impacted me for the better. And when I got to the bottom of the page, I went back to the top of the page and I started doing that. So now I had about 50 names, and I flipped it over, and I started writing, and I was on the second page, and I began to weep because I

realized that I did not invite one of those people into my life, that God, at all the right moments, had brought every single person into my life at the exact point in time that I needed to have them. And He's done the same for you.

I recognize my baseball coach, when I was seven years old and live pitching, the first season I did live pitching. I struck out every single at bat the entire season. Ask me what I batted in the order? It just depended on how many kids showed up. I was last, right? And every time, that coach would come put his arm around me and tell me, "Hey, you're going to be an all star someday. You're going to be good. Keep at it." And two years later, I was on the all star team. Why? Because somebody said good things to me.

Who put him in my life? How come he was my coach? How come he believed in me? Because God put him in my life? I think about my mom and dad. You know, you would think, if you want to have a pastor, that maybe you'd be the son of a pastor. I'm a son of a veterinarian, and I don't even like animals. But it was through my dad I learned how to pastor. I was with my dad when he was treating animals and was with their you know... What do you call it when you own an animal? With the people that owned the animal. I want to say patients. It's not patients.

But I was there when my dad put animals to sleep, and I was a little kid, and I'd be like, "Dad, come on, let's go home. Let's play catch. Let's do this." He's like, "Jeff, the animal was just put to sleep." I'm like, "Dad, the animal's dead. Let's go home and play catch." Hear my pastor's heart at the time? And my dad would say to me, he

goes, "Jeff, I'm not here for the animal. I'm here for the people. They just lost a family member." And he'd sit there and listen to them and let them weep and let them cry, and I watched my dad minister to people, because he has the heart of a pastor, and anybody that knows my dad knows he's an incredible listener, incredibly compassionate, and loves to hear people tell their stories, and he cares for them.

And every time I travel home, somebody will come and tell me about something. My dad did that was good. Because that's who my dad is. God put him in my life, so I could see what it was to be a pastor. I didn't know that at the time. And then God gave me a nurse educator for a mom, right? Why would He give me the mom that He gave me? My mom is so stinking intense. I mean she's 25 years older than me. She still has more energy than me. She's a visionary. She always told me I could do whatever I needed to do. She's my biggest cheerleader. All those things. That's my mom. Now, why would He give me those two people? Because, for whatever God had for my life, those were the two that He selected for me to get done what I needed to get done. My high school football coach, He gave me him, right? I can go down through the list of all the good.

I could also make a list of all the bad circumstances and all the people that have been hurtful and all that. Who orchestrated that? God. Why? Because it was growing me and it was necessary. Have you ever taken time to stop and pause and thank God for His entire providence in your life? Who your parents are, who your parents weren't, who your teachers are, who your teachers weren't, because there's something in you that grew you because of what God was doing in your life.

You know, Johnny Cash has a song called A Boy Named Sue. Some of you may have heard it. Short little song about how his dad named him Sue, when he was growing up, and he was a drunk, and he named him Sue and then left, and all his life he got bullied for having the name Sue. He got beat up and made fun of until one day he said, "I'm going to search for my dad and kill him." And one day he found his dad, dealing cards, and he say, "Hey, my name is Sue. How do you do? Now you're going to die." And they have this huge fight, and they draw their gun, and his dad says, "You have a right to kill me if you want to. But hey, I want you to know something. The reason I named you Sue is because I knew I wouldn't be there, and you had to get tough and strong to make it in this world. So I named you Sue when you were a little boy, because I knew I wouldn't be there to help you along. And so that's why I did that."

Well, then he starts crying and said, "Well, thanks Dad. And now if I ever have a boy, I think I'm going to name him Bill or George or anything but Sue, right?" But the point is, sometimes in life, God uses circumstances that we think are so bad to grow things in our heart that are so good.

Have you thanked God for His providence in your life? I mean, in 1 Thessalonians chapter five, verses 16, 17 and 18, it says, "Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In everything, give thanks. For this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." Give thanks. Give thanks. Give thanks. Give thanks. You don't have to thank God for bad things that happen. "Hey, this happened to me. This was awful. Thank You, God, for making this awful thing happen." That's not what you're thanking Him for. "God, I'm

rejoicing that You're still on your throne and I'm rejoicing that You're going to use this for good. And I'm thanking you that, even though I can't see it with my eyes, I know that, because you have my best and because you're always for me, in some way, in some time, this is going to work out for my good, too."

I'm rejoicing. I'm thanking. I'm praying. Have you taken time to do that? Because here's what I find: So many Christians want to move ahead in their faith, but they're unwilling to thank God for where they are. And so they complain and they complain and they complain about where they are. You can't complain about where you are, because every time you complain about your circumstances, here's what you're saying: "God, You don't know what you're doing. And I don't appreciate anything that You are. By the way, I want to be blessed." Thank Him. Thank Him for everything. He's sovereignly working things out through His providence in your life.

I mean, think about Moses' parents. They had to trust what was going to happen to their son. I mean they lived in a day and age where the king's edict was that every male Hebrew that was born would be thrown into the Nile and killed. If it was a girl, she could live. Men die. Isn't it interesting that that's Satan's strategy all the time? Before God's ready to do something good. Right before Jesus was born, what did King Herod want to do? Kill all the boys under the age of two. Satan's desire is to kill life. God's desire is to have people live an abundant life.

Amen.

Amen?

Amen.

What happened this Friday, in the historic overturning of Roe versus Wade, was a very great thing that took place. The shedding of innocent blood is not the heart of God.

Amen.

Right.

I'm not getting all political. I'm just being biblical here. I'm being biblical here. It's wrong to take a life at any time, from womb to the tomb. It's just wrong. It always has been wrong. And just so you know, I mean, I need to be your pastor here, because I know, because I pastor you, that there are a number of women here who have had abortions because they wanted to or have been forced to have them and have dealt with that voice inside your heart, where you hear the lie of the enemy saying, "Murderer, murderer, murderer, murderer, murderer." And here's what I want to tell you: Jesus Christ died on the cross. He shed His blood. His compassion is new. His forgiveness is available. He loves you no matter what. He's willing to forgive. That's who our God is, right?

It's also important that we're aware of this, because now rights go back to the state, and we live in a state that's going to be very liberal on this. So this is going to be a state that opens up for more and more abortion. So here's all I'm saying: It's one thing to stand up here and call truth truth. It's another thing to say, "What are we as the people of God going to do to stand and help women and those that are making

decisions do the right thing?" Amen?

You say, "Jeff, you're getting all political." I'm just being biblical with you. We've got too many Christians sitting on the sideline, not being involved in anything that's actually going on. And if Christians are silent, guess who's making all the decisions? Non-Christians. And when non-Christians make decisions, they make non-Christian decisions. We need Christians to rise up and be who God wants us to be. Amen?

Amen.

And I don't want to spend a ton of time on this, but I feel, as your pastor, I have to address it. Because if I'm silent, I'm not doing my job. God has always cared about life. He formed us in the womb before one of us even came to be, and he's always had a heart for both men and women. In Exodus 21:22, it talks about how much God cares for pregnant women. It says, "If men struggle with each other and strike a woman with child so that she gives birth prematurely, yet there is no injury, he shall surely be fined as the woman's husband may demand of him, and he shall pay as the judges decide. But if there is any further injury, then they shall appoint as a penalty life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise." What was he saying? Two men get in a fight. A woman who's pregnant gets hit. She gives birth. The baby's okay. The husband can fine the guy that hit his wife. But if that baby dies, a life is demanded for that life. That's how it was done in Israel. The abortion issue is not a woman's issue. A woman cannot get pregnant without a man, despite popular opinion.

Right.

Right?

Right.

Men are responsible for their actions as well. If a man gets a woman pregnant, he's responsible financially until that child's grown. And, this is my opinion, in the cases of rape or incest, he should be castrated as well.

Amen.

Yeah!

We thank God for His providence. We realize that everything is from God. It means this: When you're in a situation, you have to stop complaining and whining about where you are, and why you're not where you need to be, and how come so and so's this, and why aren't I here? And why are they there? And just start thanking God, "God, you're working it all out for my good, and if You're for me, who can be against me. And, thank you, God that even though these aren't the circumstances I would want, You're doing good in my life, and I praise you for that, Lord Jesus." That's what it means.

If you can't take that first step, it's hard to take any others. Can you thank Him today for everything that's going on right now in your life, that He loves you, He loves you, He loves you, and He's using everything that's going on in your life to build you.

I mean, think about what you have, your money, your influence, your schooling,

your prestige, your smarts, your skills, where did they all come from? I mean, God gave you the ability for those things. Or God blessed you with those things. And no matter where you are, no matter what you're doing, God is the One that's working them all out. They're all from God. Amen? Faith presently chooses to trust God for His providence.

Second is this. If you can make that step and thank God, then step two is this: Prioritize God's agenda for His people. Prioritize God's agenda for His people. Hear the Word of the Lord. It says, "By faith, Moses, when he was born..." I'm sorry. "By faith, Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to endure ill treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward."

If you want to take the next step of faith, once you're thanking God for all the reasons He made you the way that you are, with who you are and what you are and what you have, then prioritize God and prioritize His people. You can sum up the Bible by saying this: You should love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. You should love your neighbor as yourself, especially the people of God. If you prioritize your life to say, "I want to live my life to honor God to the full and use every gift and every resource and every ability He's given me to serve His people, you will be moving in the right direction. Here's the problem. Here's the problem. We don't like to do that.

We like to get our life in order. We like to get our life situated. We like to get our

life put together. And then, "If I have a little extra time, if I have a little extra money, if I can afford to do it, then God, I'll give you some stuff." And God doesn't work that way. We say, "Let Your kingdom come, let Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." What does that mean? It means, "God, let what's going on in heaven and all Your values invade earth." Where's he going to invade earth through? You. On that same chapter, Matthew 6:33 says, "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you." It's a principle in God's word. You always put God first, and you always put his people second, and you let God take care of you last.

Will you prioritize that way? Young people listen to me. You're not being taught that by many of your parents, and you're not being taught that by many of the schools. It means this. It doesn't mean you need to figure out what you need to do with your life and how you need to be successful and where you need to go and who you need to marry and figure all that stuff out, and then if there's leftover time in your life, you can give your best to God. How about give your best to God now and prioritize what He's doing in this generation, in His people, and give your best to them. And if you do that, God... all these things will be added onto you. That's what the Bible looks like. It's night and day different than what we think.

Back when I was in college, my last year as a football player, I got asked to go to a Campus Crusade for Christ conference between Christmas and New Year's. And that's when we were always in a bowl game. So the guy said to me, he goes, "Well, if you don't go to a bowl game, will you go?" I said, "Sure, we'll go." That was the only

year we didn't go to a bowl game. So he came knocking on my door, said, "Will you go to this conference in Indianapolis?" I said, "Yeah, I'll go." So I went to this conference, and I was offended. I didn't know what conviction meant. I didn't know how God worked through His word. I thought this guy was reading my mail, and I thought they were telling him about me when he was talking, and I was just upset because he kept pushing this idea that God was more important than anything in my life and serving God's people was more important than anything I wanted to do. And all I cared about at the time was getting a good job and making a lot of money and having a family and doing good.

And he kept pushing on it and pushing on it and pushing on it. At the time, he said, "Hey, you remember in World War II, where Nazi Germany signed up all these Hitler youth, and hundreds of thousands signed up for that, gave their life to that?" And he said, "Stupid." And he said, "Some of you are lining up for IBM and AT&T, and all these different jobs, so that you can be first in line to have a great job, only to live your life for this world. And he said, "Stupid." And I was getting more and more offended. And then he said this, he said, "And some of you here think you need to be a doctor." He goes, "Here's what I'd like you to do." He goes... This was his words. "Find out what a Campus Crusade for Christ person makes a year, and if you're called to be a doctor, take that for your salary. Give everything else away to missions. And if you do that, then you know you're called to be a doctor." Then I was super offended, because in my heart, I was thinking, "Wait, wait, if I earn it, and if I do it, that's my money. I can do whatever I want. Who are you to tell me?" And he wasn't. He was telling me to

prioritize God and his people, because that's the greatest return on investment you can ever have.

Will you prioritize God and your people? It doesn't mean everybody should go into ministry. It really doesn't. But if you're called to do that, then that's what you do. It just means, in your life, you prioritize God first and other people first, no matter what. And if you're in a place that says, "In my job, I can't do that," then find another job. That's what it means. And that sounds strong. And it sounds harsh. Why? Because God is worthy of all your honor and praise, and so are God's expectations in this generation. Here's a question for you. I don't know the answer to this question, but it's rhetorical enough I think I should ask it. What would happen if every person around the globe that called themselves by the name of Christ prioritized Jesus Christ first and His agenda for what He wanted them to do with their life, and that's all that mattered, and if there was time for extra things, that'd be fine. What would happen?

The world would change, y'all. What would happen if it just happened at BRAVE Church? Our city and our nation would change. I believe God's calling all of us to prioritize Him and prioritize His people. It's all throughout the scripture.

So we got to ask the question. What's God trying to accomplish right now in this generation? And what will you do for Him? What are you feeling prompted to do? You say, "Well, how do I know?" Pay attention to these things. What is it that angers you and saddens you? When you hear stories in the news, when you hear stories from friends, it just, "That just makes me so mad," or, "That just saddens my heart. I just

can't believe that's going on." The reason you're sad and the reason you're angry is because there's something inside of you that's agitated that God already put there. Or ask this question. What motivates you in ways you can't control? How do you respond to things where you can't even control it?

I mean, you remember Moses's life. Moses was a deliverer from the time he was conceived in the womb. He just didn't always do it God's way, did he? I mean, Moses saw an Egyptian fighting a Hebrew slave. What did Moses do? He killed the Egyptian. Why? Because he's motivated for his people, for God's people. He always had been. He just wasn't doing it God's way. What are those things in your life that have come out over and over inside of you that you can't control? Or how about this? What frustrates you that others cannot do as well as you. You know, you're in a group, and it frustrates you when you're in a group, and it's like, "I can do it better than them." Like if you came over to my house and I taught a workshop on fixing stuff, you would be like, "Move aside, brother. I can do that better than you." I mean, if you have gifts, you're going to see them, and you're going to feel them, and it's God bringing things to the surface.

What is it you see other people do, and you think to yourself, "I can do that as good or better than them. I know I can do that. That's just who I am." Those are things God's stirring in your heart that you need to pay attention to. I mean, what would your life look like right now if you put all of your best and all that you are into God's agenda, into His people. I remember when I was in college, I mean I was thinking about all these different things that I wanted to do, but I couldn't justify that, in what I was doing,

I was giving glory to God and serving other people. It was a job. I loved other people. I loved God. It just didn't consume me.

What consumed me was this. Somebody asked me the question one time, "If you only had three days to live, what would you do?" And I was in college. I said, "I'd go out to the streets and just preach. Because most of the people I hang out with are going to hell." Nobody else had that answer in our whole small group, and I found that strange, but here's what was going on in my heart. What was going on in my heart is I had a heart to share the gospel with people in a way that not everybody does. And that's okay. Right? I mean what's God currently doing in your life that prompts you to want to do what it is God wants you to do.

I remember when I was about 24 years old, I got to a place where I couldn't help it anymore. I didn't know what it looked like to go into ministry. Ministry to me was like a clerical robe, speaking for 20 minutes, and hanging out with old people, and it didn't sound fun. And I felt God was calling me to ministry, and I was praying about it. And God called me to be a youth director in a church. And when I was in that church, I told my dad... I was 24 years old. I said, "Dad, I'm thinking about doing a two-year commitment to be a youth pastor, but it's two years. I mean, Dad, when I get out, I'll be like 26. My whole life will almost be over." And he said, "Hey, don't worry about it." He goes, "You'll still feel young when you're 26, trust me." He goes, "Why don't you do what God's calling you to do, and then see what happens?"

And I remember being there, as a youth pastor, watching kids, watching their parents, watching all these people come to Christ, and my heart was filled with faith.

And I actually got to coach football, which I wanted to do as well. And as I was doing both, I was constantly praying to the Lord, "Ministry or coaching. What is it, God? What would You have for me?" In ministry, we were seeing people come to Christ. We were seeing people share their faith with their friends. It was exciting and exhilarating. Coaching football, we went three and six the first year, zero and nine the second year, and I'm still praying, "Okay, Lord, give me a sign. You know, that'll be enough."

And one night I was praying, and I asked the Lord just to show me from His Word. Like, "I'm not getting up until you show me." And we've all had some of those moments where God really illuminates His Word in special ways. That was one of those nights, and he took me to 2 Timothy 4:2, said, "Preach the word. Be prepared in season and out of season. Correct, rebuke, and encourage, for the time will come when men will no longer put up with sound doctrine." And it was as if He was speaking that directly to me, saying, "Jeff, I've always called you to be a preacher." And you know what my answer was? Why me? And He took me to Matthew, and said, "Blessed are your eyes, Jeff, for they see and your ears for they hear. For I tell you the truth, many men of old and prophets long to see what you see and hear what you hear and did not see it and did not hear it." And God spent time with me that night on my face as he ministered to me. And I knew by the time I got up, "I'm giving the rest of my life to full-time vocational ministry." It was over, right?

What's God telling you? How do you use everything you have for the glory of God? And you can use it as a businessman. You can use it as a teacher. You can use

it as an attorney. You can use it as a coach. You can use it anyway, so long as God is getting glory, and you're serving people in a way that brings him glory. That's what it looks like. And for me, I got to the place that, "God, I believe you've given me all the gifts you've given me to help people understand You through Your Word, so that they know how to walk with You."

I mean, you see these passages. Look what Moses gave up. Moses gave up world prestige. He didn't want to be known as Pharaoh's daughter. He could have been Pharaoh's daughter. It's like, "I don't want to identify with her. I want to identify with God's people." He could have identified with the pleasures of sin. He could have had whatever he wanted. He was living in the king's palace. He could have had a life of comfort and plenty, but notice what it says, "Considering the reproach of Christ or the Messiah greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, he was looking to the reward." What was he doing?

He did three things. If you're going to prioritize God's agenda, you do these three things. You embrace your God-given identity. You embrace your identity in Christ. You embrace who God says you are and why He put you here. Second, you're willing to endure ill treatment, willing to endure ill treatment. Had he stayed in the palace, nobody was going to mistreat him. He's in the palace, but because he's prioritizing God and His people, he endured ill treatment, and he had all the riches in the world, the richest nation in the world at the time. What was he willing to do? He was willing to expect an inheritance from God. Friends, you may not have a lot of money in this world, but the retirement package is out of this world, I promise you. Right? I mean, what's coming is

so good that no matter what you do here, it's worth it. You say, "Why would I have to endure ill treatment?" Because when you prioritize God and His people, you always endure ill treatment.

If you study the life of Moses, like I have, I think to myself, "That is a life I would never want." I mean, you got 2 million people whining and complaining all day long every day for years, and Moses humbly intercedes for them, right? I mean, all it takes is you saying, "God, I want to prioritize you, and I want to serve other people." And you get involved serving in the church, either in kids' ministry, youth ministry, young adult ministry. You lead a small group. You do whatever. And you realize, as you let God pour into you and you go to pour out to other people, you will recognize at some point in time, not everybody's nearly as excited about your ministry as you are.

"Well, how come it is I prepared all week and only half my small group showed up?" Because you're in ministry. "How come it is I did my best to present what God was showing me and they got mad at me?" Because you're in ministry. "How come it is that I prioritize God and everything's falling apart at work?" Because you're in ministry. How come it is that my neighbors have gotten upset with me? They don't even know what I do." Like, "Why is all this?" Because you're in ministry. Are you willing to endure that? That's what it looks like to live a life of faith.

If you're going to live a life of faith, you thank God for His providence and everything that He has in your life, and then you prioritize God's agenda for His people. No matter what. You say to the Lord, "Lord, you've given me all of this ability and all these resources, and you let me be introduced to these people, and this is what I can

do, and this is what I'm good at. And, Lord, I want you to show me how I can best use that for Your glory, by serving Your people." And there's a variety of ways that the Lord calls us to do that. And once you thank God for His providence, and once you've set yourself on a course to say, "God, you're first, and Your people are second. I'm giving my life to that," then you can do step number three.

Step number three is when faith presently chooses to reject the fears of this world. Reject the fears of this world. I hear people talk a lot that the more faith you have, the less fear you have. I find the opposite to be true. I feel that the bigger steps of faith I ever take, the more fear is right there accompanying those things. Notice what he says, in verse 27. "By faith." This is talking about Moses still. "He left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king, for he endured as seeing Him who was unseen." What was happening? He was being threatened by the king, but where were his eyes? His eyes weren't on an earthly king. His eyes were on the King. Can I just tell you, from the word of God, there's only one viable king, and it's the Lord Jesus Christ.

Right.

He is the King of Kings, and He is the Lord of Lords, and there is no other. And yes, we are called to honor those in authority to the extent that we don't have to compromise the word of God. But when the word of God gets compromised, then we have to serve King Jesus rather than what some earthly person might tell us. Did you know that? And this is right where Moses was. This is right where Moses lived. He wasn't afraid to turn his back on Egypt. He was saying, "I'm turning my back, and I'm

walking this way." Can I give you a privilege and a step of faith? If you're going to take this step of faith and not fear the world, when you start stepping, don't step backwards. You keep stepping forwards, right? When you walk, you keep walking. You burn the bridge behind you because you can't take a step of faith knowing, "Oh, I can go back if it doesn't work out." No, "I go forward trusting that it is, and I walk by faith and not by sight because God has prompted my heart this is the best way to serve Him. It's the best way to serve other people. And if I go this way, even if it doesn't work out the way that I want, God has a way to redirect and build something different, and I'm going to keep walking that way."

You always continue to walk, and you never, ever, under any circumstance, give up. But when you do, can I just tell you, you're going to hear all sorts of lies that are going to cause all sorts of fears. Fears like this: "If I do that, how am I going to make a living? If I do that, am I ever going to get married? If I do that, how's that going to affect my family? What if I do this and it doesn't work out? What are people going to say about me? Will I look like a fool?"

All those things are going to come into your ear, louder and louder and louder the closer and closer you get to the decision. And I find that oftentimes when you're about ready to take the step of faith that you're certain the Lord wants to do, the devil will throw something else in there, just so you can think about that. Like, "I didn't even know this job was coming. Maybe this is the way to go." It's not. God already showed you the way to go. The enemy hates your life. He always wants you to take a shortcut in your life, but you keep walking with Christ.

It's when we fix our eyes upon Jesus, and we stop fearing the things of this world. I mean, all it takes is a walk through the Old and the New Testament, and we start seeing people live like this, and it fires us up, doesn't it? I mean, listen to this text. Just listen to this. Then we'll talk about those stories.

"By faith, he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king." That's the second time we've seen that. I mean notice his parents. He learned that from them, in verse 23. Because his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child and they were not afraid of the king's edict. They weren't afraid of the king. They weren't afraid of the one that was ruling telling them what to do. Can I just tell you I'm a different person than I was before 2020?

Can I tell you I'm a different pastor than I was before 2020? Do you know why? Because I'm a truth teller. Because I've had to read through the word of God and say, "What is truth? And what should we hang our hat on? And, God, what are you saying? And is there any distinguishment between what You're saying and what the world's saying?" And I find that the world says different things that are lies.

I find this week that some of the people who are angry about woman's rights couldn't even tell you what a woman was last week. And I'm saying that with compassion, because I know there's a number of you here that have adult children that are in same-sex relationships that are grieving from the inside out, and when I talk like that, you think I'm saying that I'm upset with you, and I'm not. I'm just presenting truth, that God created two genders, and there's male and female. And he has an order for

how he created them. But, hey, even if you personally struggle with that or even if you have family members that struggle with that, I want to tell you this: God has grace and compassion for you, and He loves you.

I'm just called to preach truth. But I'm also called to be compassionate and love you, even if you think differently than me, even if you think differently than God. Amen?

Amen.

Or how about this? I mean some people that have been screaming this week, "My body, my rights," are the same people who, two years ago, forced mandated experimental medicines and worthless masks. Again, I'm not making a political statement, just telling you what's going on. And if your pastor won't tell you the truth, where are you going to hear it? Nobody else is telling you. I'm not talking about political parties, and I'm not supporting the candidates. Some of you need to get involved in the political process, because we need Christians that are making the decisions. Others of you just need to flat out vote for what's right.

You say, "Why is that important?" Because it makes a difference in what we're able to do as a church. And, oh, by the way, yeah, I understand the greater the persecution, the more the church flourishes. That's fine. But I want to see the church flourish and take over the world for Jesus Christ. Amen?

Amen.

That's what he's talking about. So we have those steps of faith. Will we take that? Will we reject what the world's saying? Because when I read through my Bible, I

read about Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego that were told to bow at the king and give him honor. And they said, "We're not doing that!" And every Christian loves that story. They were thrown into the fiery furnace. You know, the only thing that burned off was their ropes, chains, whatever.

[inaudible 00:40:00].

Not a hair of their head was singed. And then they looked, and there was a fourth one walking around in the fire with them, looking like the Son of Man, because Jesus showed up. And we love that story. Oh, that's awesome. But sometimes, people in our generation say, "Well, you can't do that." We're like, "Oh, they said we couldn't do that." We're the sheep of the Lord Jesus Christ. We listen to His voice and we do what He wants. And to the extent we can honor those in authority over us, we do that. But when they don't honor the Lord, we don't follow them. Period.

Yes.

Right? Or we read about Daniel, and Daniel did the same thing, and he was thrown into a lions' den, and the lions' mouths didn't open. Or we read about Peter getting out of the boat and walking on water. We read about David stepping out, picking up a slingshot and five smooth stones and running towards the giant in the name of the Lord Almighty. We love all those stories until God's telling us, "That's how I want you to live in your generation." "Well, I thought Christianity was nice and tame. And I thought we're supposed to be kind to everybody." Read your Bible. Truth has an edge. We can be loving and still stand on the truth. We are called to treat all people

with dignity and respect. Even people that think differently than us, but we're not called to succumb to ungodly ways ever. Amen?

The question is this: When you listen to the fears of the world, are you willing to leave comfort for your commission? We're part of the Great Commission, and friends, I hear lies the same way you hear lies. The greater steps of faith we take, the more lies that I hear. I hear lies like this: "You made a decision to get a new building here, and you made a decision to buy a new property in Westminster. Who's ever going to pay for that? You're never going to raise enough money for that. And people are going to leave the church. And why are you ministering, anyway? Because there's people in your congregation, you had a conversation with this week, and they're not even living out the life that they pretend that they're living out, and your ministry doesn't count for anything, and you're not very good. And you were lousy as a husband this week, and you're not a great dad. And when are you going to get your life together? And when are you going to do things right? And why don't you go get a real job?"

And that's usually before my feet even hit the floor as I get out of bed. So I know the voices that you hear, that are lying, telling you, "If you follow God, you're not going to have a good time in this life. If you do it God's way, you're going to lose all the pleasure. If you do it God's way, you're always going to be poor." No, if you do it God's way, He can't promise you whether you're going to be rich or poor. He can't promise you everything He's going to give you. But if you do it God's way, there's a great return on investment.

Some of you may have heard the story of Bill Borden. Bill Borden graduated from

high school in Chicago in 1904 and went to Yale university, and when he was there, during his freshman year, it was birthed on his heart with another guy to start a prayer movement there. By the time he graduated four years later, out of 1300 students, there were nearly a thousand students praying fervently daily. Check this out. Yale was known as a place, if you wanted to learn how to pray, that's where you went to school.

Bill Borden was the son of a multi-millionaire, and he wrote into his Bible. He didn't want to trust his dad's wealth. So he wrote into his Bible, "No reserves." He didn't want to trust his dad's money and income. He just wanted to serve the Lord and trust God, no matter what. When he graduated, he had a passion to share the gospel with Chinese Muslims, and so he wrote down in his Bible, the word, "No retreats." "No reserves. No retreats." He's going to go share the gospel with Chinese Muslims, and on his way to China, he stopped through Egypt to learn Arabic, where at the age of 25, he contracted spinal meningitis and died at the age of 25. When they found Bill Borden's Bible, in there was written, "No reserves. No retreats." And there was another word written in there right before he died. "No regrets." No regrets.

Friends, if you faith all the way to the finish line, you will have no regrets. I mean, this world is a vapor. So you keep your eyes upon Jesus. I love you. I love our church. Certain ones of you, I know better than others. I've had a couple dear saints go meet the Lord recently. My buddy, Matt, that shared his testimony at Bandimere Speedway this last Easter went to be with the Lord about a month ago. I got the news from his sister, knew it was coming. I remember just being in my truck and weeping when I got the news. Because I just hurt because I miss my buddy, but I know where he is, and I

know I'll see him again.

And then this week, a dear saint, one that's been in our small group for the last two years, had battled cancer, was in remission. It came back within the last month. I got to see her on Friday with my wife and my son, got to pray for her in the hospital, got to look into her eyes one last time, and yesterday afternoon, she went to be with the Lord. My heart just breaks. I had a chance to be with the family yesterday, and they love the Lord, and they're surrounding her. And we were praying, and we were thanking God for her life because she poured out so much. She was one who her and her husband prayed for me before every single service for the past number of years. And I miss her, but I know this. She isn't thinking about us. I know. I know where she is, and I know it not because she professed Christianity. I know that Matt isn't in heaven because he professed Christianity. I know they lived it.

I believe sometime yesterday they fist bumped and said, "Yeah, I went to BRAVE, too," right? Friends, there's no greater return on investment than living the life of faith, living it, because when you meet Jesus, the only thing that's going to matter is that you took a step of faith and prioritized him and prioritized God's people, and there's incredible rewards for that. And that's what Moses was doing. He forsook the riches of Egypt, saying the riches that are coming are way better. Friends, you can be a multi-billionaire in this world, and the riches that are coming are better. I promise you. If God happens to make you rich, use all your wealth for the kingdom of God. If God happens to make you poor, use your dependence upon Him to grow your faith and help

the faith of others. Because what I find, it doesn't matter whether you're rich or poor or blessed or not or whatever you feel, when I meet somebody, regardless of circumstance, that can tell me, "My God is in control, and I love Him no matter what, and He's worth it," it speaks to me. That's what it's all about.

Will you shut down the voice of the world? Will you quit worrying about the lies that things aren't going to go your way and that they're not going to turn out. That's what Satan does. Satan lies to you because he knows that God's plan is best. He always lies. "It's never going to work out. It's never going to happen. You can't do this. You don't have the education. You don't have the smarts. You don't have the time. You don't have the this. You don't have the that."

You have everything you need for life and godliness. You have the Holy Spirit in your life. If God's prompted you to do something, take that step of faith and do it. And then let's do this final one. Super important. If you can get through the first three, where you believe in the providence of God, where you can prioritize God and others, where you will reject the fears of the world and do this, no matter where you are, no matter what you're doing, always follow all of God's ways. Always follow all of God's ways.

A simple way of saying that is, "Be obedient." Don't take shortcuts. God doesn't bless a shortcut. Be willing to go the way He wants you to go. Notice what the passage says. Verse 28. "By faith, he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood, so that he who destroyed the firstborn would not touch them. God told them when they were leaving Egypt that they would plunder Egypt, but what they had to do

is, per household, take a lamb, slaughter it, eat it, but take the blood of the lamb and apply it on the doorposts, right? You're getting a picture of what was going to happen in the new Testament, where blood was going to be applied on a post. And we read that story. We don't think much of it. Have you ever put blood on your doorpost? I mean, every Israelite that put blood on their doorpost, the angel of death passed them over. I mean, they had to apply the blood.

It means this: In your life, will you go public with your love for Jesus? Will you do it? I mean it's one thing to be at BRAVE church and clap and say, "Oh, that's a good message." Will you go public? In your family, will you go public? With your kids, will you go public? In your school, will you go public? In your job, will you go public? With your neighbors, will you go public? Will you go public in such a way where some of the people that know who you are will say, "That's weird. They're strange. They're an awkward bunch." Because if you really live for the glory of God, that's how people are going to think about you. And Moses not only was willing to do that, but he was willing to teach others to do what God wanted them to do. He was willing to tell others, "You take that step of faith, too." Why? Because Moses believed, like I believe, that God wants to do things through a whole community, not just through one person, right?

That's why he had them do it. So you apply the blood, you go public with your faith. And then notice what else you do. You keep on faithing. Notice verse 29. "By faith, they passed through the Red Sea as though they were passing through dry land, and the Egyptians, when they attempted it, were drowned."

You remember the story? I mean, after ten plagues, the Pharaoh finally let them go. They plundered all of Egypt. They take off on their journey. Everything's looking good until the Pharaoh's like, "Wait a second. I don't like that." They have a pillar of fire by night. They have a cloud by day. They're going God's way. God's walking right with them until they see the armies of Egypt right on their tail, and then they're like, "What's going to happen now?" Can I tell you something about faith? Faith will always have a time where it looks like it's not going to work out. Always. How often? A hundred percent of the time.

"I got married. I mean, we both share exactly the same values and now we're married, and we think differently on a couple of things." Yes, you do. "I thought it was going to look different. This isn't the challenge I thought I was going to have. I took the job because they said this, but it ended up being this. I went there to help people for this, but it ended up being..." There's always a reason to quit. And the enemy knows that. That's why he speaks louder the closer you get to the final. He speaks louder the closer you get to the blessing. He turns up the volume to tell you how stupid you were right before God's about ready to do something great. As you keep walking, then that's when you hear. "I'm getting closer. I'm getting closer." And that's when you hear the voice even louder, like, "You were so stupid to come this way. Nobody could have been more dumb than you. And oh, by the way, this isn't going to work out," and, "Hey, where's your God now?" And, "You're the only one left," and all these things.

That's when God really is about ready to do something, so you keep walking, and you don't quit. Because what happened? You can go back and read in Exodus

chapter 14 exactly what happened. As all of Israel, 2 million people, are crying out, saying, "Seriously, Moses? We could have died in Egypt. You had to bring us all the way out here to get killed? I mean, what kind of leader are you? You're a terrible leader." And what's God tell Moses? "You tell the people to stop complaining and keep walking, and they can stand still and see the work of God."

So Moses told them, "Sh! Keep walking." And he had to convince them to go into the water, and when they did, guess what? A wind blew it back. And it wasn't that it was muddy on the ground. It was powder dry, the scripture says. They're walking through powder, 2 million people, while God holds off the entire Egyptian army. And then once they're to the other side, what's God do? Removes it so that Egypt can come flooding in. And when Egypt comes in, guess what? Now the wheels are coming off, the carts, people are like, "God's fighting against us," and all of a sudden, whoosh! The strongest army in the world collapses in one fell swoop. Why? Because they continued to walk by faith. And we love that story. But do you know, that's the same God that wants to work in your life? The same God that's telling you, "Keep walking. You're closer than you think."

The louder the voice gets is because you're closer to your destiny. And by the way, our ultimate destiny is meeting Jesus Christ face to face. So once we get to quote-unquote our destiny, then we keep walking, and we keep on walking, and we keep on walking. And that's the life of faith. Always follow all of God's ways. Will you do that?

I mean, these are steps that I find in my life are still applicable right now today in my life. Will I thank God for His providence? Will I prioritize God and His people? Will I reject the fears of the world? Will I always follow all of God's ways? Will you do that? Friends, I'm telling you, if there's one of you that hears this and says, "I'll do that," you'll go to new heights. Some of you will hear that and say, "Oh, that was a good message." But you all said, "Amen," when I said, "Who wants to hear what Jesus tells you? And who will by faith put into practice what he shows you?" You ready to take that step?

Those are one, two, three, four steps you can take every single day of your life. And if you keep walking, God will take you to the place that He wants you to be. I'm for you individually, but I'm also for us as a church. What would happen if all of us collectively said, "I'm individually going to do what God wants me to do, and I'm here to prioritize God, and I'm here to prioritize His people. And I want to do whatever I can to pour into all God's people, so that we can all be doing what God wants us to do." That's what it means to live a life of faith. Amen?

God is inviting you on a journey. He wants you to be a part of it. Would you stand with me as we pray? Father in heaven, thank You so much for Your Word. Lord, thank You for teaching us how we can take steps today. Lord, these are hard steps to take sometimes, but Lord, we believe through Your Word, if we take these steps, You'll take us to where You're leading us to go.

If you're here today, and you've never trusted Jesus Christ as your personal Lord

and Savior, you can do it right now. Say, "Lord Jesus, I believe I'm a sinner, but I also believe You died on the cross for all my sins and rose from the dead. Right now, I want to turn from my sin, and I want to confess You as my Lord and Savior. Come into my life right now." And Lord, for all those who are here, show us how to take the next steps in our life to bring you the greatest glory and honor. So that, Lord, the same God we read about today will be the same God working in and through us. We give You all the glory and honor, in Jesus' name, amen and amen. Can we give God some praise today? Amen.