

Open Hands: Stewardship with Kingdom Vision

The Great Exchange: Trading Busyness for Effectiveness

Heavenly Father,

We come before you today with hearts full of gratitude and humility.

Thank you for unchanging nature

We confess our faith that is not merely theoretical, one that actively works, transforming our lives and impacting the world around us for our glory.

We pray that faith truly works.

Help us with struggles, external pressures, difficult circumstances, understanding and isolation.

Give us supernatural perspectives to see these moments not as obstacles to our comfort.

Let perseverance finish its work in our lives so that we become mature and complete, lacking in nothing.

Grant us your divine wisdom, generosity and reproach

Help us to ask in faith without doubting.

Guide our hearts and minds for being double-minded and tossed to.

Establish our minds firmly on your truth and promises.

We recognize that we are tempted when we are tempted when we are lured by our own evil desires.

Deliver us from deception.

Remind us that you are never a source of evil or temptation.

Strengthen our resolve to resist the devil, flee from temptation and draw near you.

Help us confess our sins and purify our hearts and minds from every ungodly thought and intention.

We pray from deeper reception to your world.

Help us humbly accept the word planted in us that can save us.

Do not let us be hearers and deceive ourselves.

Help us keep unstained from the world.

Grant us discernment to recognize and courageously step away from environments, relationships and influences that would pull us away from your truth and towards sin.

Give us hearts of impartiality and genuine love for all people including the poor, marginalized, broken and those people struggling towards sin.

In Jesus name, Amen

When I first started this congregation on the westside of Chicago, I started off my congregation from the Pastor Hobson Homelessness Initiative. My first year as senior pastor of the church, I was struggling trying to get my congregation off the ground. I did not get any help or support from my family members because my family members have been all about themselves. It seems like I always get a negative vibe from my family members to serve the community spiritually and help the homelessness. When I was in Chicago, I felt like my progress was starting in the Douglass Park neighborhood and westside of Chicago because no one was attending any meetings during my first year as senior pastor of the church. I had to start transitioning and moving the congregation out-of-state to Michigan. Only thing I was able to continue to do in Chicago is serve community by volunteering at Grace Place every Saturday morning help feed the homeless and needy, serve on Catholic Charities Junior Board, become a member of Rainbow Push Coalition, serve in the Pastoral Care Ministry at Salem Baptist Church of Chicago and help feed the needy and homeless in the southside neighborhood every week. I started to become successful as a senior pastor after I moved the church operations to Michigan to file the Articles of Incorporation and make the church become more compliant with the State of Michigan government agencies. The church and myself were having financial problems trying to establish the church in Chicago because Illinois has a long process for new businesses and organizations. In Michigan, the process to start a business was a lot simpler and easier. The church had problems developing a Board of Directors in

Chicago because the church lost over \$1,000 of paid wages because the individuals were not motivated and committed to doing the job.

I have a distraction trap when I attend and sit in on other church services because it is like I am sitting in other worship services at other churches, but get distracted by checking my emails, church social media and text messages for my churches from my own congregation. It is like at other churches, I check my church social media and messages every 5-10 minutes about my own church business from staff and advisors. It is the same way when I watch other churches on YouTube and easily get distracted by my church business. Sometimes I get distracted when I am talking to family about something or having a conversation with family, but I get distracted by thinking about my own church business. It is times when I have conversations with family members, I act in a way like I agree with them but be focused on my church operations and business. I need to set more boundaries for myself when I am speaking to family members during conversations and attending other church services. I need to set a strict rule for myself by providing a No Phone Zone or Electronic Device Zone during family time and attending other worship services at other churches. I do listen to the services at other churches, but I hear the messages about 10-20% of the time because I get distracted and think about my church business and operations. One thing I need to do is start managing my schedule and calendar better because I always had to postpone meetings and speaking engagements in the past because my schedule is always overwhelmed or cramped. I had to postpone Homelessness Prevention Roundtable meetings and church community meetings because I have too much going on in my mind.

My mother just recently and unexpectedly died because my stepfather and her were talking the day before saying she was having chest pains and went into another room in the house to try to rest. My stepfather said she was in the bedroom and looked like she just went to sleep and never woke up. My aunt on my biological father's side of the family told me that it sounds like she died from a type of stroke or heart failure. Now, I have to get back to Chicago for the funeral. The funeral arrangements are being planned. My mother said she wanted to be cremated, so my aunt and some family members were at their residence in Dolton, Illinois with the people from the funeral handling her body. Family members are saying right now this happened unexpectedly. That's why when I feel like I am sick or have a serious medical problem, I always go to the emergency room. When I had pneumonia on my lung in August 2013, I went to the emergency room at Northwestern Memorial Hospital in Chicago. When I had sharp stomach pains in August 2014 and found out I had autoimmune pancreatitis disease, I went to the emergency room at Northwestern Memorial Hospital in Chicago. When I had an abscess on my jaw area starting to speak to my neck area, I went to the emergency room to get the abscess removed and drained by the doctor with stitches. Last time, my mother texted me on Sunday afternoon after 4:30 PM saying she could not talk right now and she was laying down. She was always fine before that point and she made plans to go to Dallas to visit my sister after Thanksgiving holiday. When my sister called me, she was really emotional on the phone and told me our mother recently died and told me that we need to try to get back to Chicago for memorial/funeral services. I want to say my heart is broken at this moment. My mother was a bright and nurturing person that taught me right from wrong. She taught me about responsibility and being independent as a child to an adult. I knew how to set priorities and set realistic goals for myself, such as study hard, stay out of trouble and stay in school. I know that the last moments with chest pain and heart failure are terrifying and sudden, and I am sorry she had to go through that because she lost her life. Please know I am sending my love and strength. My mother's name was Sheila Williams, but she was only a Williams by marriage. My mother's maiden name was Hobson. After thinking and preaching this sermon, I am thinking that I need to start talking to people like my sister and family members more because it is like an exodus on my mother's side of the family and too many family members having medical issues and dying. My aunt's name Sylvia died from breast

cancer, my grandmother just died on November 1, 2025 for medical reasons and now my mother just died.

1. How many of you truly feel rested at the end of the day, rather than just finished?
2. If you stripped away all your titles and responsibilities, would you still feel valuable or is your worth tied to the length of your to-do list?
3. What is the one thing on your calendar this week that you know, deep down, God never asked you to do?
4. In the story of Mary and Martha, who are you right now? Are you Mary sitting at the feet of Jesus, or are you Martha anxious and troubled about many things?
5. What are the many things in your life right now that are distracting you from the one thing necessary?
6. If Jesus walked into your home right now, would he find you running around serving or would he find you sitting focused on him?
7. Are you running your life based on the fear of failure, or based on faith in God sufficiency?
8. What if effectiveness meant doing 50% less, but achieving 500% more impact?
9. What could you eliminate this week to gain focus on God?
10. When was the last time you honored the Sabbath not just working, but intentionally resting and rejoicing?
11. What specific area of your life that your calendar, phone or finances will you surrender to God this week to choose effectiveness over busyness?
12. If you traded your anxious toil for God's peace this week, what would be the first tangible fruit you expect to see?

"As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me! Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."-Luke 10:38-42

The scripture talks about the story of Jesus, Mary and Martha during the parable of the good samaritan and the time when Jesus preached to his disciples the Lord's Prayer. Jesus directs the lawyer to the Great Commandment to love God and your neighbor. That's why we need to stop our sin with gossip and judging one another. People need to stop with their wicked ways and sin by loving and respecting people around us. You want to avoid spending time in eternity in hell after you die on earth. The scripture answers the lawyers question "Who is my neighbor? Samaritan illustrates that love is active, sacrificial and transcends social barriers. The Good Samaritan defines outward effectiveness. How do we use your time and resources to serve and help others in need? I want to say right now we need to love our friends and neighbors while we are going through something, such as mental health, anger, schizophrenia, bipolar disorders and/or depression. Martha in the scripture was showing hospitality to serve and help the people in need. Another thing about me is that I am always busy and never talk to family as much because I have serving the congregation, preaching and teaching God words on the top of my mind as a top priority. The scripture explains that action alone is insufficient if the internal foundation is missing. As christians and disciples, we need to do our work and serve Jesus, but avoid getting distracted with sin, temptation, bondage, idolatry and the world. We need to start letting Jesus guide us to help remove troubled things from our life. Turn to the person next to you and say: Do you want a clean and pure heart, or do you want a troubled heart? Your answer right now is heaving a clean and pure heart to God.

We need to avoid resentment from our family, people in our communities, friends and children. We need to be going out and encouraging people to seek God and find a loyal church home to let Christ Jesus' word teach us and give us vision to live a righteous future on earth to eternal life in God's kingdom. We need to start trusting God as our source. This is our moment and time to have our mind and life focused on God by being more obedient, reading God's word, and living spiritually disciplined with a daily prayer life. This is the time we need to be connecting our minds and hearts to God to be focused on God in our life daily.

I want to say my mother's unexpected passing is unexpected because I have a busy schedule as ordained Bishop and Senior Pastor of the congregation. I have always been a career focused person and serving in the community for the congregation and helping the homelessness. Now, the congregation has to operate under pressure for the rest of the year by working for a new Church Administrator and getting the church financial books in order for the upcoming tax season. Also, I had plans to go back to the barbershop next week to touch up my bald fade haircut to look more presentable. Now, I do not know how I will do that unless I have to wait to come back to Detroit to make the appointment later.

"Unless the LORD builds the house, the builders labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain. In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat—for he grants sleep to those he loves." Psalm 127:1-2

Solomon was history's most prominent builder. The scripture is his personal testimony. The scripture connects to human labor and security to the ultimate source to God. The scripture was part of the ascents to be cited by pilgrims. The journey to Jerusalem was arduous, demanding physical effort, planning and vigilance. The scripture draws a parallel between family life and security. We must have a legacy rooted in God to be able to get eternal life in heaven and live in the new heaven and new earth after we die on earth. Also, the scripture addresses busyness and anxious toil to effectiveness.

The church started a Homelessness Mentoring Program that will be part of the Volunteer to Work Program to help put many people back in the labor market and workforce to get jobs. I was responsible for implementing the program in 2015 because I care about helping the homeless and needy get out of poverty that lack skills and experience that are looking to get out of poverty and back in the workplace in communities. I am still working to implement the program and building a market by shakeup of church leadership so programs and operations can better succeed. I am revamping the entire congregation with new staff and leadership while keeping some people in place.

"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."-Matthew 6:33-34

Gossiping is wrong and is a sin that represents unrighteousness to God. God is the only one that can judge our hearts including people that ungodly need to understand that. Hate on people and other people's accomplishments is a sin and unrighteousness because we need to worry about our own life and destiny by stop worrying about other people and what they are doing in their life. When we seek and live our life with righteousness, we put God first in our life. It means we are avoiding idolatry, loving the word and possessions in the world, bondage, sin, evil, abomination, wickedness, and temptation.