

9.10.2023 Sermon

Scarcity vs Abundance Mindset | 2 Peter 1:3-4

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

god, life, verse, love, talking, paradigms, abundance, world, scarcity, experience, power, built, grew, knowing, external, wake, space, prayers, divine power, eyes

SPEAKERS

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So, if you have been here longer than 12 minutes, you know that I have a verse that I quote all the time. It is what has become my life verse; it just holds me, it is my anchor. It is something that I go back to again and again, probably every day. There's a reason for this, which I'll get into. But first, let me pause here for one minute.

Where's Kevin? Did Kevin leave? Oh, hi, Kevin. You're right in front of me. Yeah, exactly. Hiding in plain sight, you know? Kevin said last week, "You know, it's really like you choose from the whole Bible, right?" We're in a new series, a choose-your-own-adventure type. It's very hard to choose your verse. I spent half of the week pondering, "What verse do I want to do?" There are so many that I love. Then, in the middle of the week, I realized, "Oh my Lord, I've never preached my favorite verse, my life verse." So, I finally get to do that.

Does anybody know what it is, by the way, before we go on? What did you say? Exact match, you've been looking? Thank you, Matt, thank you for knowing me. It is Second Peter 1:3-4. This is from the Passion Translation, the one I love to personally quote to myself. It says that everything we could ever need for life and godliness has already been deposited in us by their divine power. This was lavished upon us through the rich experience of knowing them, who call us each by name and invite us to come to them through a glorious manifestation of their goodness. Consequently, they have given us magnificent promises that are beyond all price, allowing us, through the power of these tremendous promises, to experience partnership with the divine nature. By this, we have escaped the corrupt desires of the world. The alternate version from the NIV is just as beautiful.

Let me tell you why this verse is my life verse. It's because I grew up looking at my life as second best. I saw life through the lens of a half-empty glass, at least for myself. Life seemed

to treat me harshly, and I couldn't understand why things appeared to be so easy for others but not for me. This perspective permeated my life, extending into my Christianity.

Growing up, I was an atheist until I turned 18, and this skepticism seeped into my new belief system. I would wonder why God seemed not to answer my prayers, or why it felt like others were progressing more than I was. I had these burning questions living within me, gnawing at my spirit. But then, I stumbled upon this verse.

I returned to this verse again and again, as I mentioned earlier. The insecurities and doubts from my childhood did not magically disappear. Even now, I have days when life feels overwhelmingly negative, when I feel pressed from all sides, grappling with feelings of scarcity and doubt. Yet, despite these challenges, this verse serves as a constant reminder that God has equipped me with everything I need for a godly life, in this very moment.

This verse has become an anchor, tying me to other profound truths within the Bible. It isn't merely a verse that I randomly chose; it serves as a foundation that supports other teachings. When I think of abundance, I am reminded of the story of loaves and fishes where God proved to be more than sufficient, and of verses that speak of abundant giving, or of reaping what we sow.

These teachings urge me to view the world through a lens that recognizes the goodness and abundance of God. This perspective shifts the perception of God from being punitive to being abundantly generous, overflowing with love and kindness. It's a view that I believe we all wrestle with, confronting the scarcity mentality that pervades our society.

Honestly, our culture fosters this dichotomy between abundance and scarcity, a world built around comparisons and competitions. Social media, television, even the Oscars, all amplify this narrative, fueling our insecurities and dissatisfaction. We often find ourselves trapped in this cycle of comparison, constantly measuring our worth against others.

But it's essential to realize that we have been trained to perceive life as a pie with limited slices, a zero-sum game where some win and others inevitably lose. It is a dangerous and ultimately unsatisfying way to live. I urge you to reject this mindset, to embrace the abundance that God promises, and to find your worth and joy in the blessings He has bestowed upon you. It is a journey of learning to see beyond the scarcity, to witness the boundless grace and provision that God offers to each of us.

And if we do not get our cut, somebody else gets our cut. It seems that the glass is either half empty or it's half full. And I do have to say that our world is constructed around our perspective of it. It's not just our culture; our world is formed around this system. It's a reality that there are

some individuals who don't even have access to any piece of the pie, a reality that our world encircles.

So, if our world is founded on this, then we need to harbor this notion within us. And God's upside-down Kingdom proposes a different narrative. It counters the current status quo. I don't even believe it's about the pie, nor is it about the perspective of the glass being half empty or half full. Our perspectives, our viewpoints, are confined to a secular, physical, external outward perspective. We have been nurtured on this. Our brains are wired in this manner; this is the general way of thinking.

This is the reason why I devote my life to this verse, because I firmly believe there is a deeper space from which we can exist. On those rare occasions when anyone of us steps into the understanding of the profound depths, lengths, widths, and heights of God's love and abundance, something magical starts to happen within our souls. We start experiencing freedom, breath, life, hope, rest, and find a solid ground from which we can operate, grounded firmly on the belief that there is enough for me, for us, for everyone in this world.

We are not obligated to hoard or grasp tightly to things. I am reminded of the message in Philippians where it was noted that Jesus did not regard being equal with God as something to be clutched tightly. In contrast, Adam and Eve heard there was something more, and they grabbed at that fruit. But Jesus refrained. He was aware of the abundance that God possesses. Paul captures this sentiment beautifully in Philippians 4:11, expressing contentment in every situation, deriving strength through faith.

The key here, I believe, is learning the art of contentment, to find peace in that space where external chaos might be unfolding but internally, you are held securely. You know who Jesus is. This secret lies in immersing oneself and recognizing the abundant nature of God, where there's no room to question His goodness or doubt His support for us.

Here's a small exercise to gauge where your mind stands on this matter, but refrain from answering out loud: Have you ever questioned God with a "why"? At the core of this question, the assumption is that God is against you, that He could have intervened but chose not to. This contrasts sharply with a state of trust, knowing that God is on your side irrespective of the unfolding events in this world.

This world, as it stands, challenges us constantly, built upon a system oscillating between abundance and scarcity, which always seems to pressure us from all sides. Rob Holman points out that recognizing what we are battling against is vital to foster sustained, positive change. From the moment we wake, we are flooded with negative stimuli, fostering negative thought patterns, and consequently, we become what we envisage.

I can tell you from personal experience that there have been moments in my life where the first thought upon waking was a negative one. Even during my time as a pastor, this happened. It was essential to consciously alter that mindset. Now, after many years, I wake up and if I feel that negative energy, I consciously decide to shift my thinking.

Abundance and scarcity are notions that reside within our minds. I have a story that epitomizes this, and illustrates that God's abundance is always present, though many of us might not fully embrace it. Many years ago, I encountered this story while preaching. It struck a chord with me due to its poignancy and profound spiritual insight. This narrative by John McMurray, but penned by Paul Young (the author behind "The Shack"), encapsulates a profound message that I believe many need to hear. It goes like this:

She stands in front of me with her head bowed, carrying in her stooped posture, the wounds of her life, for any with eyes to see. I know that she's a child of a mean drunk, largely abandoned, an absent mother, no attachments, abused. And she's my friend. I know some of the holy ground of her story, where over time the fiery weight of the presence of love has been burning away whatever is not of love's kind. It is a graceful and painful process, this burning of the false to uncover the truth.

She stands in front of me again, her head bowed, carrying in her stooped posture, the wounds of her life for any with eyes to see. "I want to tell you about the power of paradigms," she begins, her voice often present. "You were talking today about paradigms. And I wanted to give you an illustration of their power from my own life."

For those of you not familiar with the term, and to put it simply, a paradigm is a way of looking at something. It is a pair of internal glasses through which you see and apprehend the world. Why is this important? Because every human being sees the world, themselves, and God through lenses that are crafted by genetics, experience—both painful and wonderful—by religion, or its absence, by politics, by the anger and opinions of those around, by childhood trauma, by betrayal, by exposure, by social media, by the arts, and on and on and on. The impact is profound.

If transformation is by the renewing of the mind, then guess what, God being love must work with us to destroy our false paradigms, even those most precious, because they inhibit our freedom. They inhibit our freedom to love, to heal, and to mature. And such a process is painful, arduous, and confusing.

"So, I want to tell you about the power of paradigms," she begins, her voice soft and present. "You were talking about them, and I wanted to give you an illustration of their power from my own life."

From my earliest memories, as a little girl, maybe three years old, until I was a teenager, I would pray every night. And I would ask God to change the color of my eyes to blue. You see, my dad was an alcoholic. And almost every night when he got drunk, he would turn into a fury, and he would begin yelling at me. But there was one thing that hurt me the deepest, and that I couldn't escape. He would say, "you are so ugly, even the color of your eyes are the color of..." So, every night before I went to sleep, I would pray, begging God, "God, would you please change the color of my eyes to blue?"

I'm listening, and I'm shocked. I'm right there with that little girl, begging God to change the color of her eyes to blue. I thought she paused, her head still bowed, looking at the ground. "That if God would only change the color of my eyes to blue, then my dad would love me." She stopped and she looked up. "Paul, what color are my eyes?" I am shocked. I've never noticed before. But I was staring into two of the most beautiful blue eyes that I have ever seen. And the question immediately crossed my mind: did God change the color of your eyes? "Paul," she smiles. "They were always this color. But I didn't know it until I was in my 30s. That is the power of paradigms."

This precious woman was once a child who was lied to by someone from whom she only wanted love. And it instilled within her the wrong paradigms for decades, looking into a mirror, she couldn't see the truth. That's unbelievable. But that's the power of the lens that we have. That's the power of the paradigm and how we see things. We become what we believe. And God also becomes what we believe.

So, if we look at God from a scarcity, punitive perspective, then we are forever chasing the perennial religious carrot dangling in front of our face. We are forever trying to pray the correct way. We are forever trying to be good enough, to be right enough, to do well enough. Because we cannot see that we are loved exactly where we are, right now, as we are, because Jesus died for us and covers us. We can't see that God is good, and lovely, and kind, and bigger than we could ever imagine God to be. Period.

We have all been trained to gauge our life, to gauge our blessings, and to gauge even God, based on how things are going externally in our life. And whether or not we got what we wanted. But God operates differently than we do. And don't get me wrong, listen, it definitely helps to have things going right around us.

But how things go is not an indication of how much God loves us. What is happening in our life is not an indication of the goodness and kindness of God. It's an indication of the world we live in. This is a broken world, and we are a part of this broken world as broken people. This is where we reside. Okay.

So, how does that reconcile with the idea that everything we need for life and godliness has already been deposited in us through divine power, and that it has all been lavished upon us? Personally, I have come to discover, and this is merely my opinion, that our external life isn't any indication of the truth of this sentiment. I don't believe that anything happening around us, or even physically within our bodies, is an indication that God hasn't given us everything we need. For me, it's about our internal life. It's about what transpires inside us.

It's about the fruit of the Spirit being alive and active. It involves approaching life from a place of rest and moving into work, reflecting on Kevin's sermon last week. It means living in a space where you know you are loved and cared for, that God is with you, and on your side. There is absolutely nothing we will face in this world that doesn't have an answer residing within us, for the Spirit of God lives within us. This isn't for anyone else to discover, but ourselves, through relationship.

If external factors were an indication of this verse, then wealthy people in the Western world should be the happiest on Earth. Yet, how many stars have we seen who have money, fame, and beauty, and yet are miserable? This is because external factors cannot appease the desires of our hearts or satisfy the needs of our souls to survive in this thing called life.

It's fascinating. I cannot tell you how many times people have returned from mission trips and said, and I quote, "it was amazing. They were so poor, yet so happy. They didn't even know they were poor." Our eyes often perceive external factors as crucial, seeing them as what matters in life, not the internal. We reside in that secret place where we understand that God is sufficient, and that living in that space doesn't hinge our happiness on the material realm, our successes or failures. It is not based on societal standards or our personal circumstances; rather, it's built around the God within us.

I have to mention, I'm transitioning to another part here, but my life isn't dictated by whether Tony and I get along, or whether he meets my expectations. My life isn't built around the well-being of my children or the status of my calling or ministry. It isn't about the amount of money I earn. While these things can facilitate ease, they are not my anchor. My life must be anchored in Christ and His affirmation of who I am. Even when everything seems perfect, loneliness and unhappiness can creep in, because there is an inherent longing within each one of us. The only one who can answer that call perfectly is Jesus.

Now, I want to introduce a self-diagnostic tool. I'm going to ask you to refer to the slides showing the contrast between a scarcity mindset and an abundant mindset. Let's assess where we stand. Jan has very graciously acknowledged my vulnerability in sharing this. Truth be told, we are all the same. I am no different; this is my calling, and yet, I remain thoroughly

human. There is nothing particularly special about me, Tracy Saletta. We are all in the same boat, learning and growing together.

So, when I scrutinize this list, as I often do when preparing these sermons, it is essential to remain honest with ourselves. Without honesty, there is no room for growth or transformation. We must be able to look in the mirror and evaluate our state critically.

Now, please review these slides, illustrating scarcity versus abundance: passive attitude versus proactive; fear of failure versus embracing failure; thinking resources are limited as opposed to plentiful; a pessimistic outlook versus a positive one; a fixed mindset versus an open and growing one; seeking external validation as opposed to personal fulfillment; seeing obstacles as roadblocks rather than opportunities, and so forth.

I want to note, initially, I perceived obstacles as terrible roadblocks, often attributing them to satanic influences, whereas now, I see them as opportunities for growth and change. Let's continue: narrow perspective versus openness to different ideas; a need for certainty against accepting uncertainty; oscillating between fearfulness and joyfulness; being resentful or forgiving; being controlling or trusting; micromanaging versus delegating; dependency versus independence; hoarding as opposed to sharing; fostering competition and comparison rather than collaboration and cooperation. Particularly in the workplace, collaboration and cooperation are often scarce. Then, we have surface-level connections versus deep connections, a lack of appreciation versus gratitude, and self-sabotage versus self-confidence.

Pause for a moment and consider where you find yourself. The purpose of this exercise is to identify areas in our lives where growth is necessary, and understand why it is vital. We all aspire for happiness and fulfillment, yet often find it elusive. We have all faced shattered dreams and unmet desires. We grapple with the perpetual feeling of insufficiency, be it time, money, space, companionship, or rest. In our minds, we create conditions for happiness, stipulating, "If only I had this, then I would be happy."

In my 62 years of life, the last five to ten have been particularly revealing in terms of understanding the importance of internal harmony. It's paramount to continually evaluate and grow in this regard. So, take this moment to introspect and align yourself more with an abundant mindset, fostering growth and prosperity in every aspect of life.

And the less I fix my eyes on the externals, and more on the internals, the more space is gained in my soul. And the more happiness is gained in my soul, because it's not dependent on anybody. It's dependent on this relationship with who God is. And the truth is, it is how I perceive the world around me, that either trips me up, or keeps me going.

When I'm looking at the world, and I think there's a pie, and I'm looking at it with a scarcity mindset, I am miserable. And I can still fall into that easily, so easily. So, I want to say that again. And again. I have not attained, I am nowhere near attaining. I have just learned to listen to my own mind and to go if you keep going down this road, Tracy, you are going to be sad and you are going to be miserable. Change the way you're thinking.

And then I go back to this verse again. And that's why I live in this verse. Because I know how my mind is bent. It has been my teacher, and it still is. So, I just want to go through it very quickly. That everything that we could ever need that everything there. That means total, all of it. It's the complete. It's absolutely everything, that there is nothing in this life that we will might face.

There is nothing in our lives or in our ability to live a godly life that God has not deposited in us already. Can you pause for a moment and just think about that? Imagine your core imagine the presence of God and Holy Spirit dwelling in your core. This is why I invite us all the time to go inward. Imagine that everything, the questions you have now, the concerns you have the whys, everything that you have, the answer is in Christ within you. That's very powerful. That's very powerful to know that that answer holds there.

And that God's divine love has already lavished lavish, lavish, all of these things that we need to navigate this life. That means that if you're in a terrible situation right now you're like, are like I can't do this anymore. God within you is going I can. That means that if you're afraid or anxious, and you're like, I'm freaking out, God goes, I'm not. And I'm within you. And I have the strength. And I have the love, and I have the kindness and I have the answers, and I have everything that you need.

Does it mean that everything is going to work out in our lives? No. It really doesn't forgive my whatever negativity, but it doesn't. Life does not always work out the way that we want it to. But God presses in with life, to find the path through whatever has gone on and happened in our life, and to bring healing and wholeness and fullness, because God's life is forever pressing for God's life to be manifest within us.

And how often do our prayers start from a place of not having? How often do our prayers start from that mentality of scarcity? God, please would you as a place instead of a place of God, I know that you are good, and that you dwell within me, and you have what I need. Show me, show me how to access it. Show me what I need, show me how to move through this. Show me?

Instead of please God, I just want to do enough so that you will answer my prayer. But there is a disclaimer in these verses. This is the key. This is the disclaimer. So, if you've been ignoring

me this whole time pull in here. It comes through the experience of knowing them, who calls us by name. There is not a day in a moment in our lives, that God is not calling out. There is not a moment in our lives, where God is not whispering our name.

And God is not inviting us to come to know them in a deeper way. It is so much easier to not pause and listen. It is so much easier to let life take us. It is so much easier to when we're hitting those rough moments veg out on social media or television or, or any other drinking smoking. I don't care what it is shopping. I don't care what it is. It is so much easier. Because we have been taught, find your solace, find your help and your hope in outside externals.

It is harder to pull in, and to go I need to find you God. And I need to discover the experience of who you are, and that you are good. Because once we taste and see the goodness of God, we never go back. Once we have those moments with God where God becomes bigger than life, it's like it's like bees to a flower. It's like I will spend the rest of my life searching and seeking who you are God for tastes of that honey, because I know that you aren't good.

It comes through that. That word there for experience is that the goodness sees and it means cognitive content that emphasizes a personal acquaintance with it emphasizes a knowing there is not cutting corners. You can't live off of my faith. You can't live off of church. You can't live off of podcasts. You can't live off of really cool memes with that Have great sayings on them, you know that we all post, we can't live off of that.

They're great, because they point us to God. Church is phenomenal. I'm phenomenal. The preachers are phenomenal. The preachers are all amazing, right? But they point us to God. My job on a Sunday is to encourage all of us, that when we all walk out of here, we all continue to search God and seek God on our own, and that we experience who God is on our own. Because when you're by yourself, I am not there. When you are by yourself, and you are feeling the pressure from life, the only place that you have is to go to God, people will never satisfy us enough. Never.

So, and before PS, by the way, it's important to know but before we go into any boxes, we all discover God in different ways. We all have our own ways. I personally experienced God by sitting in a chair by myself, quiet, not talking, just breathing. I experienced God in nature, I experienced God through reading books, I experience God through the mystics that draw me to go closer. I experience God and worship, all of those things, I find my pathway to move in closer to God, what is yours, you got to find yours, yours is not mine.

So, you whether it could be walking, it could be birdwatching, it could be swimming, I think of whatever his name was, that was a runner, and he felt God's pleasure when he ran. Right? It can be so many different things. So, don't go into a box and goes it has to look a certain way.

Because God created you. And God created who God is. And God puts those together, like, like fingerprints. God knows how to find you.

And some of the elementary truths are learnings about righteousness, right, which is right standing with God. It is about prayers or sins that lead to death. It is about all these number of things. That when I read the church has been stuck on forever. And I believe that God is is inviting us to a more mature place, a more mature place where we know that God is bigger than anything that we could ever know. And that God is bigger, wider, stronger, more faithful, more loving, than what our puny little minds think. And so, to end, there is plenty out there and enough to spare for everybody. God has plenty for all of us. Amen. Amen.