

Message Transcript

IN OUR CHURCH | EQUIP FOR BATTLE

AARON BROCKETT | MAY 18, 2025

Video

Anna

I don't think I've had a lot of experiences that have convinced me that God isn't real, but I've had a couple where I'm like, "He has to be real."

As long as I can remember I always wanted to be a doctor or do some type of medicine. My parents used to say whenever they were sick I was always the one that wanted to take care of them. I was the one that just wanted to be a helper.

And then when I started learning science and how the body works, I just thought that was so interesting and I was like, "This feels like the perfect combination of everything that I love."

I think in the transition from childhood to college and pursuing medicine, there really wasn't a lot of thought, to be honest. It just was like, "I might be interested in this." And by the time I thought something different, I was just so far in I don't think I really asked God. I just thought, "I like science. I like helping people. And I'm going to go for it."

I graduated in 2023 from college. I'd already taken the MCAT, applied to medical school and got in. And I just felt so committed to this path. And I think that's when that panic of embarrassment started to set in. I was like, "Well, I'm already in to school. I can't say no now. I'm fully committed to this path."

Yeah, I really didn't talk to a lot of people about it just because I didn't want them to think negatively of me or really want their input because I didn't want them to tell me I shouldn't go to school. I was too nervous.

I didn't know what the future was going to look like. Everything just felt super uncertain. And the only thing I could do was pray, "Lord, You have to make a way. You have to show me. You're going to have to make it really obvious." It was sunny. I was driving back from work. I was sitting at a stoplight. It was red. I was just sitting there. I was like, "Lord, tell me." And it was like—I can't even describe it—it was like Jesus, Himself, was sitting in my passenger seat just like saying, "Anna, don't go to school."



I was stunned. It was like nothing I'd ever experienced before. And I could not deny it. I sat there. The light turned green. People were honking and I couldn't move because my ears were ringing. I was just sitting there. I had no idea what was going on. When I felt that confidence and that peace and the literal voice of God I was like, "I have to. I can't deny it."

[In 2024, Anna was accepted to the Traders Point Leadership Residency] The residency has really forced me to trust in a lot of ways because it was so new. Ministry was so new to me. I didn't have any experience. I didn't know what I was doing. It felt like every moment was a moment to trust, to trust that I was where I was supposed to be, that I actually heard from the Lord, and learning new skills, learning to preach, learning how to manage volunteers—difference maker teams.

Just every single step felt like a moment to choose to trust Him because I was so out of my depth. I was like, "If the Lord doesn't show up, if He doesn't show up in providing me mentorship and providing me just opportunities to grow, this is not going to work."

I think both my husband and I, throughout all of Awaken, have been really experiencing a spiritual awakening that I know Pastor Aaron is always talking about. And we've given a lot of ourselves to the Lord. We've given a lot of our trust over our lives.

I had quit my job. I quit school. I started this new job and it felt like I was trusting God in a lot of these areas but not all of them. It still felt like there was this one piece that we were holding back and I think we both felt like that conviction to start tithing.

I know that the Lord has chosen to honor our obedience. I have gained a whole new perspective on what Awaken looks like now being a recipient of people's generosity as well as tithing myself. I have the opportunity that I have because of other people's generosity, but then I also get to participate in what the Lord is doing in disciplining and raising up young leaders in our church. It's just the greatest gift and the greatest joy to get to raise young people and deploy them for impact in their communities and their schools and in our church.

The more I choose to trust the happier I am.

End Video

Aaron

Give it up for Anna. That is such an incredible story. And like Anna, maybe many of you have just had an incredible Awaken story as well as we have been in this two-year generosity initiative.



I just want to encourage you this last seven months of Awaken to finish strong—those of you who have been in our church. And if you are new around here and you are wondering what Awaken is then you can go to this link beside me: vision.tpcc.org and you can get all of the information on Awaken. Man, we would love to have you jump in with us as we finish it out strong this year.

I just want to welcome everybody gathered across all of our campus locations and those of you joining us online. It's so good to have you with us today. And if you've got a Bible, and I hope you brought one, would you find Romans, chapter 12—Romans, chapter 12 is where we are going to be.

Today we're going to be wrapping up this series of messages that we have been in over the last several weeks called Battle Plans. And if you've been here then you know that we have just been acknowledging that every single one of us is in a battle of some kind. We are all fighting for something.

Maybe that thing that you are fighting for is your faith or your marriage or your kids or your financial freedom. And those are all connected to a spiritual war that we are in as well, a spiritual war between heaven and hell, God and Satan, good and evil, life and death.

Now, if we are in a battle then it just goes to reason that we need a plan for the battle. And so we want to encourage you for that battle that you are already in, there is just no escaping it, so you might as well engage in it and be equipped for it. And that's what we've been trying to do.

So, by way of review we rolled out on week one our refreshed Mission Statement that just simply says:

Clear The Way
Equip For Battle
Deploy For Impact

We want to clear the way to Jesus, we want to equip you for battle—that's discipleship—we want to deploy you for impact for Jesus in your world. We also rolled out our refreshed Vision Statement which simply says:
Taking Ground For The Kingdom Across Indy And Beyond

And guys, can I just tell you, man, God is doing something special right now, not only within our church but around the world. And I just want to ask you to pay attention. I want to ask you to pay attention and be aware of what God is doing because I don't want you to miss it and I want you to be a part of it.



And within our own church we had this prayed goal at the beginning of the year where we were asking God for 1,001 baptisms, and the reason why 1,001 is just to remind all of us that there is always one more.

Well, some of you know this. After just four months of this year we are already approaching 1,100 baptisms. So, man, this is incredible. And we are seeing stories like that all over the nation and even all over the world because I think God is on the move.

So, the week before Mother's Day we talked about how there is no way we're going to fulfill this mission and vision if we just put it up on a wall and you guys just kind of say, "Well, just keep us updated on how we're doing every now and then."

We want to deploy you for impact to fulfill the mission and the vision within your everyday life, within your work—whether you work inside the home or outside the home. So, the way that you show up for that, the attitude that you have as you work matters because you represent Jesus.

And I just kind of threw out this question, man: What if our church was known for having the best people who are the best employees in the city?

Well, today we're going to wrap things up and I want to talk about our battle plans and what that looks like within our church. Now, the reason why this is so important is because, just an observation that I've had, within the western world we have a tendency to value autonomy—really almost to a fault.

What we do is we bring that mindset of autonomy into our Christian walk. And it's the mindset that simply says (see if you can see this in your own heart): I don't really need to be involved in a church to have a relationship with Jesus. Now, maybe you've thought that. Maybe you believe it. Maybe you've heard somebody say that. And if you think that I just want you to know that you are both right and wrong. You're right in one sense that your salvation is not based upon church attendance or involvement.

You are not saved by serving in the Kids' Ministry—although pretty close, pretty close. I do believe that our Kids' Ministry difference makers are going to be living in much bigger mansions than the rest of you. Alright? I just believe that. I just believe that.

So, you are right in that sense. You are wrong in the sense that your spiritual growth and formation—another word for discipleship—is absolutely dependent upon it.



There is also a risk that comes with it. Maybe you or somebody that you know possibly has a story of church hurt. And maybe for that reason you tapped out, you ducked out of church for a while. Maybe you're in a season where you're returning to church because of some church hurt.

I just want you to know, I'm going to acknowledge that's real. That's real. I can relate. Some of the people who have hurt me the most in my adult life have been church people. So, church hurt is real.

By the way, Jesus had that in His life as well. The religious leaders turned on Him and His disciples all denied Him. And you and I continue to betray Him over and over and over again with our sin. And yet, He still laid His life down for the church. And He calls her His bride.

See, your involvement in a Bible teaching, Jesus loving, people serving church—now, I'd love for it to be ours but it doesn't have to be ours—you're involvement in that, you being a part of the regular gathering, the Bible word for that is *ecclesia* is critical for two primary reasons (and I'll just say this unapologetically) your formation and the fulfillment of the mission.

See, you and I can't do either of those on our own. You cannot do formation on your own. You cannot fulfill the Great Commission on your own. The problem with the individualized me and Jesus sort of faith is Matthew 28. That just gets in the way. The Great Commission is communal, not individual.

So, Jesus didn't say, "Hey, just grow deeper and deeper in your relationship with God. Seek out one-liners that you can post on social media. Listen to your favorite sermons on your podcast. Ask God to make your life as cushy as possible until He returns again." That is not the Great Commission. No, the Great Commission is go and make disciples. You cannot do that alone.

So, He gave us a set of expectations for our formation as well as a set of expectations for the mission that He desires for us to help Him fulfill. That's what I want to talk about today. And our passage is Romans, chapter 12, verses 2 through 8.

Now, for those of you who are not familiar with the book of Romans, man, Romans is the Mount Everest of the Scriptures. It is Paul at his absolute intellectual best as he unpacks what the gospel message is as well as its implications. Romans chapter 12 really marks a transition in the book.



See, all of the content prior to chapter 12 is Paul like heavy, heavy, heavy theology. We get to chapter 12 and past it is heavy, heavy application of that theology. In other words what does this look like in our everyday lives as redeemed people? That's what he's getting at. So, I want to start in verse 3 of chapter 12. He writes:

"Because of the privilege and authority God has given me, I give each of you this warning: Don't think you are better than you really are."

Now, that's just good counsel right there. Isn't it? Now, some of you are like, "You know, I'm kind of wrestling with my self-esteem right now." And you might be like, "I don't really have that problem. It might be nice to think better of me that I really am every once in a while." And I get that too.

But what might surprise you is that really everything is linked to a disproportionate view of self. So, that person who appears too confident in himself to the point of arrogance, you just need to know this, more than likely underneath all of that is insecurity. Someone who self-promotes does so because he is afraid that no one else will. It's kind of like, "I'm humble. I just want other people to know how humble I am." You know?

But the gospel teaches us—I love this—the gospel teaches us to think rightly about ourselves. And that Greek word rightly just simply is translated as accurately not too high, not too low.

So, you might be asking, "Well, why is Paul bringing this up?" Because if we have an elevated view of ourselves, then we won't realize how desperate we are for God to instill upon us spiritual gifts, which we will get to in this passage.

If we think too lowly of ourselves then we won't realize that God values us so much that He gave us this life that Jesus died for us to have and sent His Spirit to fill us and empower us with spiritual gifts to advance His Kingdom on earth. We're thinking so lowly of ourselves that we underestimate the power of the Holy Spirit working in and through us. So, we sit the bench when He wants us in the game.

That is why he starts with this. He says, "No, here's a better way."
"Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us."

Now, I want to clear something up here. That measure of faith thing, that doesn't mean that God gives different amounts of faith to different people.



Metron

The word measure is the Greek word metron from which we get the word meter. And it means a standard of measurement. So, what Paul is saying here is that God has given us all the same standard of faith. What is that faith in? Faith in the finished work of Christ, and that faith makes us profoundly equal in God's eyes.

However, each of us with that faith possess the same righteousness of Christ, we are part of the same body. And we have received the same Spirit. And we are as righteous as the most righteous saint that ever lived and just as valuable because we have the same righteousness that they do and the same Spirit that works within us. You've heard me say this before. The same Holy Spirit that lives in me lives in you.

So, again, don't think too highly of yourself. You are such a desperate sinner that Jesus had to die to save you. Don't think too lowly of yourself either, because through faith, He's given you all this righteousness and He's put His Spirit in you. Verse 4:

"Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other."

So, what Paul is doing here is he is using physical anatomy to illustrate a spiritual reality. Our human body has roughly 78 organs, multiple systems, all containing multiple parts that keep it going. And some of them definitely are more visible and critical than others. However, all of them are important. Would you not agree?

Have you ever stubbed a pinky toe and it just completely messes up your day? It's just a little pinky but it totally takes your whole body out of commission. You are like walking funny just because of this little, tiny pinky and it's like, "Well, I don't want to do without it. It is not as important as my heart, but I still want it. It's a part of my body. And I need every part contributing and optimal for my body to be functioning at its absolute best."

And believe me, the older I get the more I realize that to be true. So, in verse 6 it says:

"In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy,"



Now understand, prophesy isn't just like predicting the future or certainly not adding to Scripture. I love this definition of prophesy. It's giving voice to what God once said in this moment that would be in alignment with what He's already said in His word. So, that's prophecy. If He's given you that gift: "speak out with as much faith as God has given you. If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously." I love how he equates leadership with responsibility, because that's what it is. "And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly."(NLT)

Now, let me just go ahead and acknowledge this because whenever we see a list like this, of gifts, in the Scriptures, we're tempted to read it sort of like a spiritual Enneagram list, "Oh, I think I'm a serving others with a kindness wing." So, we're kind of like, "Well, you know, I read this and I think I have this gift so that means that I don't have to do the others."

No, we do all of the gifts but what is your right hand? Or for those of you who are left handed, what's your left hand? What is it that God has kind of placed upon you?

I believe that some spiritual gifts are bestowed upon us for a certain season. They might be temporary. And then other spiritual gifts are given to you for life. And there can be a lot of confusion and misunderstanding around the spiritual gifts, but I really, really like this definition. You might want to jot this down.

A spiritual gift is whatever God wants to do in the world through His people (the church), by the Spirit, at this moment, in pursuit of the mission of Jesus
A spiritual gift is whatever God wants to do in the world through His people, that's us, through His people (the church), by the Spirit, at this moment, in pursuit of the mission of Jesus.

In other words a spiritual gift isn't something that terminates on you. A spiritual gift isn't something that you do to self-promote. A spiritual give isn't something that you do because, "Oh, it just makes me feel so close to God." Now that may be a by-product, but it's for the mission of Jesus, it's for the advancement of His Kingdom.

Which is why I really do believe that teaching and preaching is a gift that God gave me at a certain time in my life. The reason why I say that is because most of you all didn't know me before I started preaching, but I was a shy kid.



And I remember it was almost like a light switch, God laid this gift upon me that I've had to steward and get better at. And I do not take it for granted because I remember the day in which He laid it upon me. And it scares me to death that He might take it off of me. The minute I begin to use it for me, the minute I begin to self-promote from it... No, he gave me this gift to advance His Kingdom and nothing more.

Listen, man. You may not have that gift, some of you do, but you have one. When you gave your life to Jesus, the Holy Spirit lives in you, you've got at least one. And it is expected, it's not optional, that every Spirit filled Jesus following Christian would be available for God to be at work. And by God, His Spirit, He has gifted you for that work. Now, your responsibility is to discover the gift, and then steward the gift for His glory and the good of others. And not manufacture it.

Now, can I just say this pastorally? Some of you have a gift and you are using it for your own end. You need to repent of that. Others of you have a gift and you've not discovered it because you are afraid to. You need to repent of that. You need to figure out what it is and then you need to begin to leverage it for the Kingdom of God.

For those of you who call Traders Point home, what I mean by that is this is the place where... Maybe you gave your life to Christ here, maybe you are raising your family here, you've had a spiritual awakening here, you are receiving spiritual nourishment and direction from our church as well as this is the place where you are on mission—we have five expectations of you. Did you know that? We expect something of you.

And really these are just five ways for you to maximize how God wants to work in and through you here. So, the church will benefit in the sense that we want to see the mission move forward, but you'll benefit from them as well. I really believe that if you'll embrace these five expectations your marriage will get better, your parenting will get better, your friendships will get better, your relationship with God will be more intimate, you'll grow by leaps and bounds spiritually.

Now, I did not say perfect. I didn't say they will solve all of your problems. I didn't say there wouldn't be trials and difficulties to overcome. But I will say that your life will get better.



So, let me just walk through these five expectations.

Come Ready

Encouragement/Encounter

Man Your Station

Find Your Group

Give Your First and Best

Our first expectation for our church fam is that you would come ready. What I mean by that is that you would show up every time we gather, mainly the weekends, but it could be other places than that, and when you show up, man, you're ready.

Now, sadly, the average church attendance today for committed Christians is only like once or twice a month. And that's actually being generous. I know for many of our church family you're way more than that, but the national statistics say once or twice a month. And they say, "Well, I'm committed because I've been there."

Every now and then I'll bump into somebody at a store and he will go, "Hey, man, you're my pastor." And I'll go, "Hey, when was the last time you've been there?" And he is like, "2021."

Wow. We've met since then.

So, I get it. In this world in which we live we have so many distractions and there are a million things working against you getting here on a weekend. Aren't there? "Oh, man. It's been a long week at work and I'm tired. I'm going to sleep in. I'll commune with God at bedside Baptist. That's where I'll be attending today." Or maybe it's your kids' sports. Kids' sports—I'm going to say this—I love sports. I love kids. Kids' sports together can become an idol. And, man, I want your kids to be involved in sports. But chances are they ain't growing up to be professional. Alright? I hate to break that to you. Our kids' sports can take us out of the rhythm.

Vacation can take us out. How about this? We do our technology. Man, I love our technology, but for many of us we are like, "I'll just catch it online later." It's not the same, man.

Here's one. Often we don't think about this: depression and spiritual attack take so many people out. We have a tendency to retreat in isolation when we are spiritually and emotionally hurting. Why do we do that? There are a lot of different reasons. I get it. I get it. But that's when we need to be here the most. Why? Well, because Satan wants to isolate you.



We've talked a lot about the analogy the Scriptures uses for Christians (the church). It's a flock of sheep. When is a sheep the most vulnerable? When it wanders off from the flock, that's when the wolves can attack.

In Hebrews, chapter 10, verse 25 it gives us this encouragement. It says: "And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near." (NLT) Now, keep in mind, he wrote that roughly 2,000 years ago. His return is near. And it says, "Let's not give up meeting together as some people do." Apparently first century Christians were going to the lake and having travel soccer games as well—apparently that was what was going on.

And the point of gathering together, listen to me really clearly, the point of gathering together is not so that God will put a little, gold star on your attendance chart. It is not about receiving content, because you can get content anywhere. If that was the case, if it was all about receiving content, then yeah, man, catch it on the podcast later. But it's not about that. It's about two primary things. It is about encouragement—yours and others, because encouragement is two-way. And it's encounter. Just think about it, "Why should I get up and go to church?" because you need encouragement. "I'm just so encouraged today." Yeah, man. Get to church so that you can encourage.

"Well, I'm just feeling really dry right now in my walk." Yeah, man. You need to have an encounter with God. You need the encouragement and the encounter with God and with others.

How about this? "Well, I'm feeling pretty encouraged today." Yeah, loan some of that to other people. See, man, when you stop thinking, "What will I get out of church attendance?" and begin thinking, "What can I contribute to it?" it will radically change your view of attending church.

Plus I think COVID taught us how much we needed to be in the room together. People tell me that all of the time. They are just like, "You know what? I got into a rut," or, "I got into the habit, the routine of just watching online and then I showed up and I just forgot what I was missing." There is no comparison to being in the room with others in worship.

And I would even say if that is true of worship, that is also true, I think, in preaching.



We've talked a lot about the analogy the Scriptures uses for Christians (the church). It's a flock of sheep. When is a sheep the most vulnerable? When it wanders off from the flock, that's when the wolves can attack.

By the way, the irony is not lost on me that this is the weekend that Northwest is online due to auditorium renovations. Other campuses, man, you don't know any different. This is just a regular weekend for you. But Northwest crew, may this be a good reminder that we need to be back together in person. And when we come back together this room is going to be awesome and it's going to be more facilitated for that gathering than before.

Can I, as your pastor, just give you a couple of tips? Here are a couple of tips, man, for how to come ready.

Come Prepared
Bring Your Bible
Expect An Encounter
Action Precedes Encounter

Would you just prepare to be here? It always kind of stuns me on Daylight Savings time that it messes everybody up. Guys, we know it's coming now-a-days. I remember back in the day before iPhones and you had to manually change all of the clocks ahead of time. So, that was understandable why you might sleep in and think that it was, you know, an hour time difference.

Now our iPhones automatically change it for us, man. And how about this? Because I know I've got to preach on that day I'm like, "Okay, it's 10 o'clock. Actually, in reality it's 11 o'clock so I'm going to go to bed now. I'm not going to use this as a way to stay up."

Now, that's true for every single weekend. Could you begin preparing, and I know we're going to be starting Saturday night services in August but I just begin preparing myself on Sunday, not just to preach the sermon but to have an encounter with God the night before. I just start thinking about it, man. I start praying about it. Don't let that be an after-thought.

Here's one of the other reasons why you need to be actively prepared, Satan knows what could happen, the potential of this. So, he'll throw everything at you. Have any of you ever gotten into a fight with your spouse on the way to church? No, not this room. Not this room.

Man, have you ever just like yelled at your kids on the way here and you walk in with that face, you know? It can be challenging so we need to come prepared to experience an encounter with God.



How about this, man? Bring your Bible. Just bring your Bible, man, and bring something to jot down a few notes in. I know that I put the Bible on the screens behind me. That's just to help us visually. But I want you to know your way around the Scriptures.

And you've heard me say this before. I want to preach a sermon in a way that you have the confidence that you could read it on your own. So, bring something to write down notes—even if you just write down one thing that God wants you to hear. Just come ready for that.

How about this, man? Just come expecting to have an encounter with God. Now, I can't promise that. What I can tell you is if that's me, or whoever is preaching, we are going to give our absolute best effort to this.

Here's how I like to think about preaching. It's like building a fire. All week long I'm chopping the wood, I'm laying the wood on the fire, I'm getting the thing ready and then I'm hoping that the Holy Spirit lights it. But sometimes He doesn't, you know? It's like, "Well, I gave it a nice try."

But what if the Holy Spirit ignited that thing on fire? You just come expecting to have an encounter with God—lean in on the tip of your toes, just expecting. My favorite thing is when I begin to preach and people are kind of casually sitting back drinking their coffee and about three-fourths of the way through they put down their coffee and they are leaning forward and their mouth is gaped open because of being whooped. I want you to have an encounter. I love this, man. Don't wait to feel like it. Action precedes feelings. And if you know what you need to do, you need to do it and then you feel like it. And then can I just say this? When the Holy Spirit prompts you to do something, just resolve right now, "I'm not going to wait, I'm going to do something right then when the Holy Spirit prompts me."

Those are just a few little tips about how we can come ready. And I just want you to know every single weekend there is somebody brand-new here for the first time. There is somebody hurting who needs encouragement. And you can be the answer to that prayer. So, man, you come ready. You don't be the person who just walks in and says, "Well, I'm expecting to be catered to." No. You begin to serve others.

Which leads me to the second expectation:

Man your station

Man your station. Now, warning—hard truth coming in. The church isn't here primarily to meet your needs. I know that's like a bomb kind of moment. It's like in the western world when everything is catered to us and the customer is always right.



But the church is not here to primarily meet your needs.

Now, I will say this. The minute you become a Christian is the minute all this stops being about you. Now, it's for you. I want you to grow here. I want you to engage here. But it's not primarily about you.

And this is all kind of summed up in the mental image that we kind of talk about around here of the church. It is not a cruise ship. The church is a battleship.

You are like, "What are you talking about?" Well, let me just give you a few examples. Cruise ship Christians just want to be fed and catered to. Battleship Christians roll up their sleeves and serve others.

Cruise ship Christians get upset when someone new sits in their seats. Battleship Christians freely give up their seats to make room for one more. Cruise ship Christians complain when their favorite program gets changed. Battleship Christians celebrate when God begins to do a new thing.

Cruise ship Christians sit around and wait for someone to be friendly to them. Battleship Christians go look for someone who needs to be encouraged and to be friendly toward. Cruise ship Christians get skeptical when somebody with a sketchy past gives his life to God. Battleship Christians get emotional with celebration, remembering that without the grace of God none of us stand a chance.

