

**Highly Unlikely**  
**Series: *In His House***  
**1 Kings 17:7-21**

**Pastor Groeschel**

Well, welcome everybody. Before we dive in to part two of *In the House*, I want to tell you, next weekend, at all of our LifeChurch locations, we're going to be baptizing. Your campus pastor can tell you how you can sign up. This is a very important time to invite people in to see your new life in Christ.

Also, we're launching a brand new, five-part message series, called *Love Song*, where we're going to look at – believe it or not – the Book Song of Solomon. If you haven't read Song of Solomon, just the fact that I'm going to preach about it has my wife already praying, passionately, that I'll say things that are appropriate – this is one of the most amazing books in the Bible – as we look at, how do we prepare to have godly marriages?

We're going to look at preparing, becoming the right person. We're going to look at, how do we have romance in the bedroom. You may think you know, but God even has good advice for you. We're going to look at, how do we overcome conflict, and build a marriage that goes the distance. That starts next week.

All of you know somebody who would love to have a great marriage. Invite them. Those of you who know people, their marriage may need a little spiritual tune-up, invite them. That's next week.

Today we've got back one of my favorite people in the entire world. Christine Caine is one of the finest evangelists, communicators, and leaders, around the world. She started a new initiative to help women lead in the marketplace, with a focus on Christ. It's going to be amazing. She helps rescue women from all over the world from human trafficking, through A21. All the way from Sydney, Australia, from Hillsong Church, one of the finest biblical communicators in the entire world – would you show love and honor to my dear friend, Christine Caine?

### **Christine Caine**

Hey, church! How are y'all doing? I'm so glad to be back this week. Coming once is, like, really awesome, but back-to-back weekends is pretty fantastic. I love this house. You ought to thank God that you are planted in such a great house, under such great leaders. Pastor Craig and Amy are absolutely legendary. Nick and I love them, and wherever you are, in all of our 20 locations, all the other churches that have come in for this service, I want you to thank God right now, right where you are. Give Him a round of applause. It's fantastic to give honor where honor is due. I love them dearly.

And I can't wait until next week's series. My husband's getting more and more excited, because Pastor Craig's getting more and more excited, as it gets closer to the Song of Solomon. And it's been a while since I've gotten into those books. I can't wait to hear his take on them. You want to be there. Anyone that you know that's unsaved, bring them. Anyone will come anywhere for sex.

So, anyway, I'm just kind of putting it out there. That would be a great thing. If I were you, I'd be here next week. That's all I'm saying. I love this house. I might just get into the Bible right now. That might make everyone feel far more comfortable. You're like, *Who is this Aussie woman?*

This is where we speak the Queen's English, on every location. I'm going to teach you how to speak English right now. We say "awesome." It's very dignified, very awesome. So, after "three," wherever you are, I want you to say "awesome." One, two, three ... Oh, that sounded awesome! Okay, I'm going to get you to say it one more time, just like an Australian. One, two, three ... Okay. Now, after "three," I want you to say it like an American. One, two, three ... [Unintelligible, 3:31] I'm just going to leave that with you. You can pause and ponder that.

First Kings we're going to turn into. Today we're continuing our series *In the House*, and last week, we talked about "Embracing Your Place," and I hope that you feel so much more valued, in terms of embracing the place that God has set you in. And if you

take your place now, you'll be stunned at the place that God will have for you years from now.

So, after we've embraced our place, I want you to understand that God always uses highly unlikely people to do the things that He's called us to do. So, today, if you're taking notes, we're going to look at our text from 1 Kings 17, verse 7, and we're called "Highly Unlikely." First Kings 17, verse 7, says, "7 Some time later the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land."

We're talking about, the prophet Elijah had gone to King Ahab, and he had said, "There is going to be a drought in the land. There is not going to be any more rain until I say there's going to be rain," and that's because King Ahab was a very, very naughty man.

Scripture actually tells us, in the chapter before this, that – I want to read this correctly. It says that "he did more to provoke ... the Lord, the God of Israel, [to anger] than [did all] of the ... kings of Israel before him."

That is not what you would want in your resume, that you did more to provoke the Lord to anger than anybody else on the planet. I'm like, *Move before the lightning bolt comes*. But anyway, that was his claim to fame, also, that he married Jezebel, and then they became worshipers of Baal. So, I mean, we're in a mess already.

So, Elijah turned up, he said, “There’s not going to be any more rain.” And so, God had sent him to a place where the ravens had looked after him, but now that brook had dried up, and God’s saying, “You’re moving on,” just to give you a little bit of context.

So, he says, “**8** Then the word of the Lord came to him: **9** ‘Go at once to Zarephath in the region of Sidon and stay there. I have directed a widow there to supply you with food.’” This is awesome. He had ravens, now a widow. It’s getting fantastic. I mean, you’d be feeling good about yourself right now.

**10** So he went to Zarephath. When he came to the town gate, a widow was there gathering sticks. He called to her and asked [her], “Would you bring me a little water in a jar so [that] I may have a drink?”

This is very customary at the time. Nobody ever said “no” to somebody having a drink of water. “**11** As she was going to get it, he called, ‘And bring me, please, a piece of bread.’” And she turns around, and she says:

**12** “As surely as the Lord your God lives,” she replied, “I don’t have any bread – only a handful of flour in a jar and a little olive oil in a jug. [I’m] gathering a few sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my son, that we may eat it – and die.”

Now, you might not think that's funny; I really do. She's going, "Okay, I don't have what you want. I'm about to do this, and then we're going to go and die." I mean, I'm feeling like this is the kind of person I wish God sent me to for provision. I'm feeling like she is the woman that's got something for me.

**“13** Elijah said to her, ‘Don’t be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first’” – everyone say “but first” – “But first make a small loaf of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son.” He leaves out the “and you can die” piece. **“14** For this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: ‘The jar of flour will not’” – everyone say “will not” – “‘will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the Lord sends rain on the land.’”

**15** She went away and did as Elijah had told her. So there was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family. **16** For the jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry, in keeping with the word of the Lord spoken by Elijah.

**17** Some time later the son of the woman who owned the house became ill. He grew worse and worse, and finally stopped breathing. **18** She said to Elijah, “What do you have against me, man of God? Did you come to remind me of my sin and kill my son?”

**19** “Give me your son,” Elijah replied. He took him from her arms, carried him to the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his bed. **20** Then he cried out to the Lord, “Lord my God, [You have] brought tragedy even on this widow I am staying with, by causing her son to die[.]” **21** Then he stretched himself out on the boy three times and cried out to the Lord, “Lord my God, let this boy’s life return to him!”

**22** The Lord heard Elijah’s cry, and the boy’s life returned to him, and he lived.

What a story. What an awesome story. I love the Bible. If you ever thought it was boring, you’re reading the wrong book.

And so, here we go. So, there is a prophet who’s declared a drought on the land. There’s not going to be any more rain. So, this is a time of famine; this is a time of drought. There is not enough for anybody.

And so, what God does is, He sends the prophet to an unlikely place, and in that unlikely place, He’s provided an unlikely person to provide food and water for the prophet. And then, He asks the unlikely person to provide this in a very unlikely way. God always has an unlikely strategy. And then, that ended up producing a highly unlikely result. And throughout Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation, the one common theme that you will find is, God always uses unlikely people, and He sends them to

unlikely places, and He gives you an unlikely strategy, and you end up with a highly unlikely outcome.

I mean, case in point: I'm speaking here, at LifeChurch, this weekend, and everything about the miracle that God is doing in this house is highly unlikely. See, sometimes you can be living in the midst of a miracle, and not even realize it. Many of you do not even know that you're in the midst of an absolute miracle.

When God was thinking, *I want to do church in a whole different way in America. I want to do things using a different methodology, and I am going to go to an unlikely place ...* So, He came to Oklahoma City. Now, for many of you, I know you think this is the epicenter of the entire universe, but just saying, as somebody that comes from Sydney, Australia, this is a highly unlikely place to start a move of God.

And then, not only is this a highly unlikely place, God goes to find a highly unlikely person – Pastor Craig Groeschel. Now, I know we now look at him as the awesome man of God, full of wisdom, and power, and might, and gift, and skill, and ability, but when God asked him to start this church, I guarantee you that he would be the first to say, he would have been the most highly unlikely candidate to do what is being done here.

Then, He gives him a highly unlikely strategy! He says to him, “We’re going to do multi-site, and we’re going to end up doing church like it’s not been done before” – the

famous seven last words of the Church: “We’ve never done it that way before.” And so, people freak out because it’s highly unlikely.

And then, what happens? We end up with a highly unlikely outcome. I’m standing here today, able to speak to our 20 different locations, just from our church here, let alone the hundred-plus other churches around the globe that are listening to this service! It’s highly unlikely. But it was God choosing to go to an unlikely place, to find an unlikely person, who would do an unlikely thing, and have an unlikely result.

When God wanted to get the Bible into as many hands as possible, in modern history – in all of history, not just modern history, in all of history – He went to an unlikely place – yet again, Oklahoma City, the epicenter of the universe – and then He found another highly unlikely person – now, I know Bobby G. is cool. I mean, we could do a rap song about Bobby G. – but an unlikely person, gives him an unlikely strategy, and we end up with a highly unlikely result: over 150-plus million – and I couldn’t even keep up. I was trying to get the most updated thing, but it goes up every second, as you’re looking at it on your phone. God always goes to unlikely places, finds unlikely people, asks them to do unlikely things, and they end up with a highly unlikely result.

So, the Lord sends this prophet to Zarephath. Why is that highly unlikely? Because Jezebel is from Zarephath. You would think that God would send the prophet to somewhere in Israel, but He sends him to the place of famine. He sends him to the place

that Jezebel is from, and He says, “I’ve given a widow there. I’ve commanded her. I’ve talked to a Gentile. I’ve talked to somebody that is not one of us, and I’ve told her to provide for you.”

He could be thinking, *Why am I going to Zarephath? That is the least likely place where there is going to be provision. God, You’re the one that told me to say that there’s not going to be any more rain until I say so, and You haven’t told me to say so, and now You’re sending me to the most barren of places, and You’re telling me there’s going to be provision in the most barren of places?*

The thing that I’ve discovered from God is that, often, the place that we think is the most unlikely place is the place that bears the seeds of a miracle that we have been waiting for in our life. The most barren place – the place, dare I say, where you are right now.

You see, most of us, we think, *If I was just in another place ... If things were just different ... If I just wasn’t here ... Man, if I was just married, my life would be so much better. And then, all the married people, If I was only single, my life would be so much better. If I just had children, then ... If I just didn’t have any kids, then ... If I was just in another church, where they recognized my gift, then ... If I just had more money, then I’d be able to give more. If I just had a better job, then I would be more dil – If I just ... If ... If ... If ... Man, if I just got there ...*

We always look for “there” – somehow, this other place, any place but where I am. That’s where we normally think “there” is. *If I was just where Chris Caine is ...* It just always amuses me when people say that, because what is “there” for you is “here” for me. Because you’re saying, “You’re there,” and I’m going, *I’m here. I’m not there, I’m here.* Some of you will get this by lunch today.

You are only ever “here”; you’re never “there.” There is no “there,” because when you get “there,” guess where you are? Here. So, you only have “here,” and this place, and this moment, to do what God has called you do to. If you don’t embrace your place here, you’re never going to do it there.

And so, right in this moment, God has only given you four things, ultimately, that you can help to grow your life with. You have time, you have talent, you have a tongue – with your words – and you have treasure. So, God says, “What are you going to do with your time, with your talent, with your tongue, and with your treasure, here?”

Because what you do with it here, in this place – difficult season in your marriage – in this place – challenging situation with your kids – in this place – challenging finances – in this place – challenging moment at work – in this place – what you do in this place that may seem the barren place, that may seem the dry place, that may seem the place of no provision ... God says, “That’s the only place you’ve got: here.”

So, what are you going to do with your time here? What are you going to do with your talent here? What are you going to do with your tongue here? What are you going to do with your treasure here? Because what you do with it here will decide whether you ever end up there. What are you doing with it in this place?

God's planted you in this house! You're not in another house, you're in this house! So, would you dare to believe that, here, God has your destiny worked out, that in this place, what you do with your time, what you do with your talent, what you do with your tongue, what you do with your treasure, here, will determine whether you end up where God has for you to end up in your life?

Twenty-five years ago, when I walked into Hillsong Church, I was a fragment of the person that you see today – full of potential, full of destiny, but I was so broken. I'd been left in a hospital, unnamed and unwanted, when I was born. My birth certificate doesn't have a name on it. I had been sexually abused for 12 years. I was so full of brokenness. I grew up in the poorest zip code in my state; second-generation, migrant Greek, before *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*, when it was not cool to be Greek in Australia. I was so marginalized because of my ethnicity, and my gender, and my socioeconomic background, and I was so full of shame, and guilt, and anger, and bitterness.

When I walked into that church, you would never have thought, *This woman's going to run a global anti-trafficking organization. This woman is going to speak around the world.* You would have felt sorry for me, and thought, *Whoa, get away from her.*

I had a number two buzz cut all around my hair, “V”s cut out of my hair – anything that wouldn’t draw attention to me as a woman, after the abuse, and the pain, and the heartache, and the hurt that I had gone through. I was so full of unforgiveness, so full of shame, so full of bitterness. But my destiny was in the house.

And because I started in the house there ... I didn’t have much to give, but I could turn up and clean the bathrooms. That’s literally my first thing that I did, serving. I turned up. And all this destiny that you see now, today, was on my life now, but if I didn’t take my place in the most unlikely of places, in a house that was in a warehouse in the back of Sidney, Australia – if I didn’t do something there ...

Because see, now what is “there” to me, 25 years ago was “here,” 25 years ago. And if I didn’t step into “here” 25 years ago, I wouldn’t be “there” 25 years later, which has now become “here” for me, 25 years later.

Case in point, in case that’s all too complex for you: Wherever you are now is the place that God wants you sow your time, your talent, your tongue, and your treasure. Wherever you are, whatever season you’re in ... And you end up growing to where you

need to go. You don't ever arrive where you're going. You embrace your place where you are, in the house, right now, and then God takes you to where you need to go. So, she started there.

I've only ever gotten my miracles of God here, in this place, wherever place I was in. So, when I was a youth worker, it was in that place that I started serving God. And I tell the miracle stories now of how I ended up seeing the police department in our local community, and they gave us a one-million-dollar facility that we were able to use as a youth center, which became one of the most influential youth centers in Australia. But you know, at the time, that didn't look like a likely place. I was in the back of nowhere, in a country town in Australia. But in that place, provision was there. I just had to believe God in that place.

I don't know where you are right now, but you're thinking God's provision is going to come from somewhere else. And God said, "I'm sending you to Zarephath. At that place I've provided provision for you." The ingredients for a miracle are always in your midst. You've just got to look at what you've got in your midst.

I remember when I was a driver at church. I've just come from Joyce Meyer's conference, and there's probably not a larger media ministry, or ministry, on the earth today, in terms of impact around the globe. Well, 20 years ago, I was one of the youth leaders that was assigned to driving her. Well, I just took my place, being a driver. Who

would have thought a driver would, today, end up speaking at her conferences? But because I took a non-glamorous job of driving, when nobody else wanted to step into that place ...

It's amazing where you end up. The provision for a miracle is always there. It's always in that place.

And so, I wonder whether, today, you would think that your place is unlikely, that God couldn't do anything with you, God couldn't use you, because all the circumstances of your life don't seem to be aligned, and don't seem to be in a really nice, perfect place.

Pastor's just finished a whole series about selfies, and how we end up projecting this wonderful image out there. Let me just tell you, nothing's perfect, and no image is great. Everybody is in a place that, in some season, and some area of their life, it appears barren, it appears dry, and it appears difficult. But God is the God of miracles, and He turns up, and He provides provision in those dark and those hard places.

And then, He assigns an unlikely person. I mean, you're talking about a widow that was about to make her last meal, to die. And God says, "That's who's going to provide for you."

I always laugh, because God uses the most unlikely people! And dare I suggest, we are those unlikely people, because most of us are just like this widow. We look at what we don't have!

The prophet turned up, and he said, "I want you to give me some bread." She goes, "Hey, man, I haven't got any! I've got some oil, and I've got some water." What she didn't recognize is, she had the ingredients for a miracle in her midst. But she was so busy at looking at what she did not have that she didn't recognize what she had. And that's what we do.

And so, what we have to understand is that God says, "I'm just using ordinary people. I'm going to take Pastor Craig, I'm going to take Bobby, and I'm going to do outstanding things. If I want to start a global anti-trafficking organization, I'm going to take an unnamed, unwanted, abused, adopted chick from the back of Australia. I'm going to use the most highly unlikely person to provide the ingredients of the miracle."

And you're that person. The seeds of greatness are in you, because you're an image-bearer of Almighty God Himself. You're created in His image. There is not one person under the sound of my voice that is not created by God to have an unlikely result in your life, because the Spirit of God lives on the inside of you, and He uses holy, imperfect people to do extraordinary things. He took a widow and said, "You're going to provide for the prophet."

He always used unlikely people. He took Moses, who says, “I – I can’t speak.” And I could imagine God’s thinking, *Wow, that’s got a lot to do with the parting of the Red Sea. If you were eloquent that would make it easier, but anyway ...*

Because you see, whatever gift you think you have, whatever you think you bring to the table, God just laughs and goes, “Wow, that was going to make all the difference to Me changing the world. You, on your best day, really can’t add anything to Me. I’m God, in case you didn’t notice. I’m omnipotent. I’m omniscient. I’m omnipresent. Knock yourself out, but there’s nothing you could do that I really need. I’m just giving you the privilege to be a co-laborer with Me in My harvest. Knock yourself out. If you would just understand, you are a broken vessel. You’re a jar of clay. I already know that. I just wish you would wake up to the point that you’re not perfect. I’m perfect. I’m God. You’re not. I’m just looking for availability, not ability, so chill out, and just get involved and start doing something.”

That’s all God wants you to do. It takes all the pressure off. It takes all the pressure off.

He says, “I always use the foolish things of the world to confound the wise.” I laugh every time I sit in major government meetings, or – I just think, *I am living proof of that Scripture.*

But many of us, we don't give God the opportunity to do something extraordinary, because we will not invest our time, our talent, our treasure, or our tongue. We won't sow it in, because we think, *I'm unlikely. What would my words of affirmation do? What does my giving in this church do? I mean, look how big this is! Look at the impact!* And we devalue our contribution because we think, *I'm unlikely.* And we think, *I mean, it's an unlikely place! When I get in to some better position, when I've got it more together, then ...* The peril of "when" and "then." And God says, "I wish you would just understand "here" and "now," not 'when' and 'then.'"

You know, He always gives us an unlikely strategy. He said to the woman, "I want you to give your jar, I want you to give your oil and your water, I want you to give me the bread first." And she's looking at him, thinking, *Whoa! I just told you I'm about to make a meal for me and my son, and die.*

I just want you to see how irrational our logic is, when it comes to God. We go, "You know, I know I haven't got enough anyway to pay all my bills, but I'm not going to tithe, because you know what? I'm just going to take this home and die." At least go to heaven having tithed. I just go, *Really?* I can't even work out the logic.

I remember when I got my cancer diagnosis, and I'm out there, and I'm preaching, and leading people to Christ, and everyone's going like, "Whoa!" I said, "Listen, if you're on the edge of eternity, you want to be taking as many people home as you can. If

I'm going to get there, I'm going to take as many people there with me." That's all I'm going to say.

Our logic is that we get crippled and immobilized, and we don't do what God's called us to do. See, the miracle was waiting to happen in what she had.

I'll give you a case in point. Say you have 20 dollars. There's two ways to look at it, and this will locate whether you have a scarcity mentality – the widow did – or whether you have a sufficiency mentality. And the way you view God will actually dictate what you do with your time, what you do with your talent, what you do with your treasure, and what you do with your tongue, and your words. Because you can look at this and go, *I've only got 20 dollars. I can't do anything. I know we've got a missions outreach, but I've only got 20. That's not going to do anything. Man, I only earned 200 bucks this week. I can only tithe with 20. How embarrassing. Man, if I had a thousand, then I would give it because that would be awesome. But I've only got 20. It's not worth it.* So, we put it back in our pocket. See, that's a scarcity mentality.

A sufficiency one is, "I've got 20 dollars. I've got to sow this! I've got to give this! Man, this 20 dollars, it contains the seeds for a miracle."

See, what happens with us, we just think *I've only got ...* and we get crippled and paralyzed, and we hold back, and we think, *I'm just going to take this and die.* But then,

when you understand the power of seed, you go, *I've got – I've got 20 dollars. I can't wait to plant this in the ground, because the 20 is going to become 40, but I've got to plant it.* But what we do is, we don't understand that in here is the ingredients for a miracle.

So, if we stopped focusing on what we don't have – *Gee, I wish I had a thousand.* You don't have a thousand, but you've got 20. The devil wants us to look at what we don't have, but God never asks us to sow what we don't have. He just says, “What have you got?”

The prophet said to her, “What have you got?” “Well, I haven't got ... But I've got ...” He goes, “I didn't ask what you haven't got, just, what have you got?” “Oh, I've got this.” “Great, I'm going to show you how to multiply it. I'm going to show you that while the earth remains” – Genesis 8:22, seedtime and harvest.

It doesn't matter what Mr. Wall Street, or Mr. Dow Jones – he's always having a schizophrenic attack; he's always going up and down anyway. It really doesn't matter. But God says, “While the earth remains” – seedtime and harvest. So, I'm going to activate an eternal principle!

We've got to understand, don't minimize the potential of the seed because of the size of the seed! Seeds never look like much – they're seeds! What many of us do is, we abort the potential in the seed because we don't sow it.

The offering bucket comes around, and we go, "Oh, I've only got five bu – I've only got ten. I can only tithe five, because I only earned fifty." And so, we keep it in our pocket. And what we've done is, we've aborted the potential in the seed, because you can only activate the potential when you sow the seed.

And so, a lot of us, we do it with our words – "I won't sow it. Who cares what I say, if I speak a word of life to anyone. It's really not that important." "I've only got this much time," so we don't sow it, because we go, *If I only had that time ...*

Whether it comes to my talent – *Well, I can only serve on this, or, I could only give this.* And we minimize it, and we devalue it, and we abort it because we keep it in our pocket.

What we have to do is stop talking about what we don't have, and start giving what we do have. And if you start doing that, you'll begin to activate a miracle. This woman had to understand that the exit from her need was always seed. She had it in her midst. And the prophet said, "What have you got?" He says, "Don't be afraid," because fear cripples, fear immobilizes, and fear paralyzes us.

When I got the cancer diagnosis, I knew my battle wasn't against cancer, because there's a name that is above the name of cancer, and it's the name of Jesus. But my battle was a battle against fear. Because fear will try to cripple and immobilize me, and say, "Okay, I can't activate my faith because I'm too busy being paralyzed by fear."

So many of us do not sow – when it comes to church life, when it comes to understanding that God has planted us in the house, we do not sow our time, we do not sow our talent, we do not sow our treasure because we have this sense of fear and scarcity, like the widow did, that somehow it's going to run out!

But when you understand the source of your supply, which is God, you know that He never runs out! He's the God of more than enough! He's the God of overflow. He's the God of abundance! That's what He does!

The devil is after your generosity, because Scripture tells us that the world of the generous gets larger and larger. So, the devil wants to shrink our world. He wants to keep us small, by helping us to just hang on, and contain, and be scared.

And God says, "Do you not understand, the more that you give, the bigger that your world becomes?" The more that you sow – the more generous you are with your treasure, the more generous you are with your time, the more generous you are with your talent, the more generous you are with your tongue, you will end up enlarging your

world! And so, everything that you want anyway, God is going to do exceedingly, abundantly above and beyond anything that you could ever ask, hope, or think, but you've got to sow it! You've got to sow it! You've got to give it out.

So, the key is, he says, "But first ... But first, give me some bread." That's the test. "Seek ye first" – Matthew 6:33 says – "the Kingdom of God." The devil is after the first.

That's why the Lord says, in Malachi, "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, all of it." And that's the first 10 percent. Bring it all, because if you give the first 10, the other 90 percent is going to last a whole lot longer than you ever thought, because that's what God does.

So, the devil goes, "Let me take the first! Let me take the first." And we give God the leftovers of our talent, the leftovers of our time, the leftovers of our treasure, and then we wonder why our world shrinks, and doesn't enlarge.

He says to her, "But first, bring me the bread," because the first is a sign of trusting God. It says, "God, I'm giving You the first, and then I'm trusting that all the rest is going to go a lot further than it ever would have, because I've given You first." In Scripture, it's called "the principle of the firstfruits."

And if we, the body of Christ, understood the power of first, then we wouldn't withhold anymore; we would give it first. Give Him your time first. Give Him your talent first. Give Him your treasure first. Give Him your words first.

And then what's going to happen? You're going to have an unlikely outcome. Scripture tells us that, guess what? It never ran out! It defied logic! She was going to have enough just for her and her son to die! Now the Bible says that he ate, she ate, the son ate, and it never ran out!

And the fact is, what you're trying to protect is going to run out! But when you give it to God, and you say, "You are the source of abundance," you know the power of your source, you no longer have a scarcity mentality; you have a sufficiency mentality. And that's because most of us have been raised on Keynesian economics, which basically says – we all went to school, maybe it's just in Australia – that economics is the allocation of scarce resources.

I don't know what God they're serving, but my God doesn't run out. My God doesn't run dry. There is not scarce resources; there is more than enough! More than enough!

Let me end with this thought. She didn't realize, when she was feeding the prophet – because of her obedience, God kept her and her son alive. She didn't realize that the man that she kept alive, God was going to use to bring her son back to life. She didn't know

that her miracle was going to need a miracle, somewhere down the track. And there's some of you listening to me today, and your miracle needs a miracle. But your miracle's in the house.

You see, I didn't know, 25 years ago, when I started sowing into Hillsong Church, and giving of our time, and our talent, and our treasure, and Nick and I together, as we've continued to do that over 25 years – I didn't realize, as I was sowing into our buildings and our campuses around the world – Well, today my own daughters are being blessed by that. That house is providing for my own daughters today, and the youth ministry that my daughters are growing in. You don't think I'm grateful to God that I was sowing into the youth group when I was a youth leader, and people like Joel Houston were in that youth group, and they were 12- and 13-year-olds, and I was speaking at their little Connect groups, and today they're running United Around the World, and my daughters are now being ministered to by the people that I ministered to 20 years ago?

Let me just say, the miracle's always in the house; you can't ever outgive. You give, and it will continue to give. You know who visited me in the hospital? It wasn't the government. It was the church. You know who brought my family food? It was the church. You don't know when your miracle is going to need a miracle, so the greatest thing you can do is invest your time, your talent, your treasure, and your tongue into the house, in Jesus' name. In Jesus' name. God continues – God continues to use highly

unlikely people to go to highly unlikely places, to do highly unlikely things, and have highly unlikely outcomes, and you might just be that person today. Let me pray for you.

Father, I thank You for this extraordinary house. I thank You for every person that You've planted in this house. And Father, I thank You that the greatest days for this house are ahead of them, and not behind them. Father, all of what is happened is simply a foundation for all that You are yet to do in this place. Let every single one of us understand that there is no other place; there's just this "now" moment, in this place, where we can give You the opportunity to do whatever You want to do, in and through our lives. Father, we say we trust You with the first – not our leftovers, but the first. Have Your way, and blow our minds. I pray in Jesus' name, amen, church. Amen. God bless you.

### **Pastor Groeschel**

I don't know about you, but I'm glad to be here and now to hear that great message, and I'd love to have you all join me in prayer.

God, thank You so much for bringing Christine to minister life into us today. Holy Spirit, have Your way, as You speak to Your church, and minister to us.

All of our churches, as you reflect in prayer, right now, some of you, you're in a barren place. Your focus may be on what you don't have, rather than what you do have, and you want that focus to change.

At all of our churches, those of you who would say, "I really do, I want to see what God has given me – my talent, my time, my tongue, the words I can speak, the treasure that I can give. I want to invest those things, plant those seeds, that there would be a harvest of miracles ..." All of our churches, if you are maybe in a more difficult place right now, in your marriage, in your career, maybe in relationships, and you want to focus on what you do have, and plant those, would you lift up your hands right now and say, "Yes, God is speaking to me about this"? I know God has spoken to me.

Father, I thank You that You work through unlikely people, use unlikely things, to bring about unlikely resources. God, I pray that just as Christine was a driver, and now You're using her to do way, way more, I pray, God that You would take people who are faithfully serving where they are right now, that they would give what they have, serve in the way that they can, God, that You would use their gifts right now, right here. Prepare us, God, for what You have later, as we're faithfully planted in the house right now.

And God, for those who will give a tithe for the very first time, to return 10 percent of what You trusted into their house back to Your house, God, I thank You, in advance, that their faith will be built, and they will see Your faithfulness, God, as they take a step of

faith to worship You first with what You've given to them. God, we thank You for the miracles they will experience.

As you keep praying today, I'm so excited because in a few moments, there are going to be some unlikely people meet a very loving God. In my own life, I was in college, and nobody would have thought that I would have become a follower of Jesus. I would have been the most unlikely guy because I was running the other direction.

There are some of you here today, and you are here and now because God wanted to speak to you. Everyone else would think you would be unlikely to become fanatically committed to God, you would be unlikely to surrender your life to Christ. But you know something that they don't know, and that is that you're being drawn to the things of God. You may look very unlikely on the outside, because you've been doing things that are very, very different from what God would want.

But the good news is, when you come to Him as you are, He accepts you, because of His Son Jesus, who died so your sins could be forgiven. And when you call on Him, it doesn't matter who you are. He makes all things new. And that's why many of you are here today, and you know it. You may look unlikely on the outside, but you are likely, because God sent His Son Jesus to say "yes" to Him today.

All of our churches, those of you who'd say, "Yes, by faith I turn from my sins, and I turn toward Jesus, and today I surrender my life to Him" – that's your prayer, lift your hands high right now. All of our churches, you say, "Yes, by faith I surrender to Him." You at Church Online, you click right below me, and as we have people at churches across our country and beyond calling on Jesus, would you join your faith with theirs? Everybody praying aloud ...

"Heavenly Father, today I come to You to give You my life. As Jesus died for me, I give my life to You. Forgive me of all my sins. Make me brand new. Fill me with Your Spirit so I could follow You. Plant me in Your house, that I could serve You and make a difference in this world. My life is not my own. Today I give it to You. In Jesus' name I pray."

Would you all worship big, all of our churches? Give God thanks. Give Him glory for new life in Christ.