

Summary of the message

“UNSTUCK & Fit for God’s Kingdom”

by Pastor Bryan Hudson, DMin.

Overview

This message concludes the series, “**Forward: The Only Direction God Is Moving.**” Pastor Hudson explains that God’s movement is always forward, even when life feels burdened by turmoil, disappointment, or backward momentum. The sermon’s final emphasis is that believers must become “**unstuck**” in order to remain **fit for God’s Kingdom**. The central challenge is not only dealing with the past or present difficulties, but recognizing how those things can leave a person spiritually, emotionally, mentally, or practically stuck.

The message ties together previous themes from the series:

- the **peril of the past**
- the **peril of the present**
- the **promise of the future**

Pastor Hudson argues that becoming stuck is often the result of dwelling on the past, being overwhelmed by present circumstances, or remaining attached to systems that hinder progress. God, however, calls His people to move forward in faith, focus, and freedom.

Main theme: God is always moving forward

A foundational thought in the message is that **God is never moving backward**. Even in a broken and chaotic world, God’s purposes continue forward. The believer’s responsibility is to align with God’s movement rather than become trapped by fear, regret, distraction, or unhealthy attachments.

Pastor Hudson encourages listeners to keep a **positive and forward-looking posture**. This does not mean denying life’s hardships. Instead, it means acknowledging what is real without becoming consumed by it. Life contains both challenge and joy, and believers must intentionally look for signs of hope and joy rather than fixating on negativity.

Illustration from nature: signs of spring

To illustrate this forward momentum, Pastor Hudson uses the image of **daffodils blooming in a neighbor’s yard**. For him, these flowers are among the first visible signs that spring is coming. Though winter may still bring cold weather or even more snow, it cannot stop spring from arriving.

This becomes a spiritual parable:

- seasons continue in their appointed order
- winter does not cancel spring
- temporary harshness does not stop God’s forward movement

The lesson is that believers should learn to look for “**signs of spring**” in their own lives and circumstances. Even when conditions are still difficult, God gives reminders that change, renewal, and life are on the way.

Review of the earlier messages in the series

Pastor Hudson briefly summarizes the earlier parts of the series.

1. The peril of the past

The past becomes dangerous when people keep **looking back** instead of learning from what has happened and moving on. He distinguishes between:

- remembering**, which can be useful and healthy
- looking back**, which can become destructive

He uses the example of **Lot’s wife**, who was told to flee judgment and move forward, but instead looked back and became trapped in the destruction. Her problem was not memory but attachment. Something in her heart was still tied to what God had called her to leave.

The lesson: believers must not allow the past to haunt them, define them, or pull them back into what God has already delivered them from.

2. The peril of the present

The second danger is allowing **present circumstances** to redefine one’s reality. Pastor Hudson refers to Israel at the Red Sea. Though God had delivered them from Egypt, they suddenly faced an impossible barrier ahead and an enemy army behind. Their present situation seemed to contradict God’s promise.

When Moses cried out to God, God responded: **“Tell the people to go forward.”** Pastor Hudson explains that God was not first speaking about physical movement, but about **internal movement**—moving forward in heart and mind before breakthrough happens externally.

The key point is that faith begins inwardly. Before people walk forward physically, they must first move forward mentally and spiritually.

3. The promise of the future

God’s promises always point toward the future. Yet many people lose sight of that future because they are distracted by the pain of the past or the pressure of the present. The message calls believers back to what God has already spoken and promised.

Becoming stuck: the result of past and present peril

Pastor Hudson says the result of living trapped by the past and present is that people become **stuck**. That stuckness is the main issue addressed in this final message.

He turns to two biblical texts:

Luke 9:62 – about being fit for the Kingdom

John 5 – the healing of the man at the Pool of Bethesda

These passages are brought together to show that Kingdom fitness requires focus, forward movement, and freedom from disabling systems.

Luke 9 and the meaning of being “fit for the Kingdom”

Pastor Hudson points to Jesus’ instruction to the disciples and especially to the statement:

“No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”

He explains that Jesus is speaking about commitment, focus, and readiness for Kingdom work. Using the image of a man plowing with oxen, he shows that a person cannot plow a straight furrow while constantly looking backward. Farming required sustained attention, effort, and discipline.

The spiritual meaning is clear:

- if you commit yourself to God’s work, you must not become distracted
- you must travel light
- you must not carry unnecessary burdens
- you must maintain your focus on the mission

Pastor Hudson defines **“fit”** as:

- suitable
- ready
- well-positioned for Kingdom service

He emphasizes that Kingdom living changes how a person handles life. It does not mean never resting or enjoying life, but it does mean knowing how to set aside distractions when it is time to do God’s work.

He also warns about spiritual pride and overconfidence. When people boast too much about their devotion, they may invite testing. The better posture is humble, steady faithfulness.

The man at Bethesda: a picture of stuckness

The sermon then revisits the story of the man at the **Pool of Bethesda** in John 5. This man had been in an infirm condition for **38 years**. When Jesus asked him, **“Do you want to be made well?”**, the man did not simply answer yes. Instead, he began explaining the system he was trapped in:

- he had no one to help him into the water
- someone always got there first
- his opportunity never came

Pastor Hudson highlights that the man’s response revealed how deeply he had been formed by his situation. He had become so used to his system of failure that he could only explain why healing had not happened.

Key insight: the man was stuck in a system

The point is not merely that the man was sick, but that he was embedded in a **system of false hope**. Pastor Hudson questions the entire arrangement at Bethesda:

- many sick people were gathered there

all were waiting for a miracle
 there is no clear evidence that this system was truly producing healing
 it may have functioned as an illusion of hope more than a source of help

He also notes multiple failing systems in the story:

a public or social system that left suffering people without meaningful support
 a religious system that cared more about Sabbath regulations than the miracle Jesus performed
 a personal system in which the man had normalized disappointment and dependency

Thus Bethesda becomes a symbol of how people can remain trapped in environments and structures that promise hope but actually preserve their stuckness.

Stuck people and stuck environments

Pastor Hudson expands the lesson by observing that stuck people often gather around other stuck people. In such circles, people can end up exchanging stories of failure, pain, worry, and limitation without finding a way forward.

He is not mocking suffering, but pointing out a pattern:

people often organize around their wounds
 they adapt to broken systems
 they begin to speak repeatedly from their stuckness

This repetition itself becomes a symptom. When a person cannot imagine another possibility and only retells the same defeat, it becomes harder to hear help when it comes.

He warns listeners to be careful not to speak so much from their condition that they stop listening to the voice of deliverance.

False hope and rigged systems

One of the strongest themes in the message is that some systems are **rigged to keep people stuck**. Bethesda represents hope that is disguised as a trap.

Pastor Hudson applies this idea to modern life. He mentions examples such as:

consumer debt
 credit card traps
 burdensome contracts
 destructive relational patterns
 organized drama
 chronic worry
 shame and stress
 unhealthy emotional cycles

His point is that many people are not merely suffering random problems; they are participating in systems that reinforce bondage. Some of these systems are external, while others are self-created habits and patterns.

He describes this condition as being:

highly organized in worry
 highly organized in stress
 highly organized in shame
 highly organized in financial trouble
 highly organized in drama

In other words, people can build routines around dysfunction and then wonder why they remain stuck.

“You are not the problem—the system is stuck”

One of the sermon’s most important pastoral insights is this distinction:

You are not the stuck thing; the system is stuck.

Pastor Hudson tells listeners:

you are not your trauma

you are not your environment
 you are not your circle
 you are not your bondage
 you are not the system trapping you

This is not presented as an excuse to avoid responsibility, but as a way of restoring identity. God did not create people to live in bondage. The problem is not the person's God-given worth, but the structure, attachment, or condition surrounding them.

This shift matters because once a person realizes the system is the problem, they can begin to step out of it.

“Get unstuck. Leave the boots.”

Pastor Hudson shares an illustration from Paul Scanlon about being stuck in mud while wearing boots. The key realization was: **the person was not stuck—the boots were stuck**. The way forward was to step out of the boots.

This becomes the central metaphor of the sermon:

leave the boots
 step out of what is holding you
 recognize that what you are standing in may be stuck, but you do not have to stay attached to it

The phrase means that a person must detach from whatever is trapping them, even if that step is uncomfortable or messy.

The real miracle at Bethesda

Pastor Hudson reframes the story of Bethesda with a striking statement:

The miracle was not in Bethesda.
The miracle was not in the water.
The miracle was leaving the water.

This means the man's breakthrough did not come through the old system he had trusted. It came through Jesus' word calling him out of that system.

Jesus simply said, **“Rise, take up your bed, and walk.”** Pastor Hudson emphasizes that this was not dramatic in presentation. Jesus did not perform a show. He spoke a word, and the man got up.

This highlights another theme:

deliverance is not always dramatic
 breakthrough is not always emotional or spectacular
 sometimes change begins with a simple word, a clear decision, a shift in environment, or a new mindset

Becoming unstuck is often practical, not dramatic

Pastor Hudson then gives very practical examples of how people become unstuck:

change your environment
 set boundaries
 stop consuming what is harming your peace
 walk away from destructive mindsets
 end unhealthy relationships
 refuse gossip
 limit what feeds anxiety
 stop participating in cycles that deplete you

He shares a personal example of stepping away from excessive news consumption after becoming mentally and emotionally burdened. He connects this to Psalm 37's repeated command, **“Do not fret.”** For him, this was an example of stepping out of the boots—recognizing what had begun to trap his mind and choosing a healthier posture.

He also recalls a pastor friend telling him plainly, **“Change your mind.”** That counsel became transformative. Sometimes becoming unstuck begins by refusing to keep rehearsing the same frustration.

Personal responsibility and helping others

Pastor Hudson makes clear that people cannot effectively help others if they themselves are constantly being pulled down. There is a need to maintain one's own spiritual and emotional position so that one can remain able to serve.

This supports the earlier teaching about being **fit for the Kingdom**:

suitable
ready
well-positioned

Kingdom readiness includes knowing how to guard one's focus, peace, and purpose.

The "FORWARD" acrostic

Near the end of the sermon, Pastor Hudson returns to the series' central word, **FORWARD**, and assigns a spiritual quality to each letter:

F – Faithful
O – Obedient
R – Resilient
W – Wise
A – Aligned
R – Redemptive
D – Destined

This acrostic becomes a summary declaration of the life posture needed to move with God. A forward-moving believer is someone who is faithful, obedient, resilient, wise, aligned with God's purpose, redemptive in outlook, and destined for God's calling.

Conclusion and final prayer emphasis

The message closes with prayer and reaffirmation. Pastor Hudson asks God to help His people:

remain fit for the Kingdom
stay suitable, ready, and well-positioned for service
recognize and reject systems that lead to stuckness
avoid traps disguised as hope
gain wisdom to step out of destructive systems
train others, especially young people, to avoid rigged traps such as consumer debt
receive mercy and grace in the process

He reiterates that:

the miracle is not outside of God's instruction
the believer is not the stuck thing
the stuckness is in the system
God gives grace to step out of whatever holds us

The sermon ends with a corporate affirmation:

Forward is the only direction God is moving, and therefore forward is the only direction we are moving.

Core message in one sentence

This sermon teaches that believers become fit for God's Kingdom when they stop looking back, recognize the systems that keep them stuck, listen to the liberating word of Jesus, and intentionally step forward into God's future.