

“Built Different” Series

Echo Church | Year 1 Week 8 | February 22, 2026 | Rich Saunders Jr.

Expand – Part 2: Lengthen Your Cords

Isaiah 54:1–5 (NKJV)

Introduction

When we first got our pet turtle, it was smaller than a key fob. Small. Quiet. Manageable. It could sit in the palm of your hand. So naturally, the tank was small too. Because when something looks small, you assume it will stay small. But we learned something.

Turtles grow based on the environment they’re placed in. If the tank is small, growth is restricted. If the tank is expanded, growth continues.

The turtle had the potential the entire time. The tank determined how much of that potential could be realized. And one day we realized something powerful: The turtle didn’t stop growing. The tank stopped allowing it to grow.

That’s capacity.

Capacity is the ability to contain, carry, or sustain something.

But spiritually, capacity is more than size.

It is strength.

It is maturity.

It is alignment.

When God says in Isaiah 54:2, “Lengthen your cords,” He is saying: Your current structure cannot hold your future size.

Isaiah is speaking to a people who had lived in captivity for seventy years.

Displacement does something to a people. It shrinks expectation.

They had gone from:

Promised Land → Captivity

Temple worship → Foreign soil

National strength → Scattered survival

By the time Isaiah 54 speaks, they are not powerful. They are fragile.

God is not saying “lengthen your cords” to a thriving empire. He is speaking to a discouraged remnant.

In ancient Israel, tents symbolized household and inheritance.

So when God says: “Enlarge the place of your tent... Lengthen your cords... Strengthen your stakes...” He is speaking covenant restoration. Your household is about to expand beyond what you’ve seen. Your inheritance will exceed your loss.

This is not hype. It is covenant fulfillment. The Real Issue, Capacity. Israel had been living in what felt like a small tank.

Small expectations.

Small thinking.

Small vision.

Small faith.

But God was not saying they were small. He was saying their structure had been restricted. You are not incapable. You’re constrained.

And many believers today struggle with capacity because we’ve been disciplined into smallness.

Not intentionally.

But culturally.

We were taught to survive.

To be safe.

To not expect too much.

To “just make it in.”

We learned how to endure captivity. But not how to prepare for expansion.

And over time, that produces a quiet resignation.

Low expectation.

Muted anticipation.

Spiritual minimalism.

Yet deep inside, you feel it. There is something bigger in you. Not ego. Calling. Not ambition. Assignment. Not hype. Heaven’s intention.

The tension you feel is not pride. It’s potential.

The Sanctified Stretch

Here is where it deepens. Sanctification is God enlarging the tank. If the turtle grows faster than the tank expands, stress happens. If your influence grows faster than your character, collapse happens.

If your opportunity grows faster than your discipline, exposure happens.

God does not just grow you. He grows your container. He stretches your prayer life. He stretches your obedience. He stretches your endurance. He stretches your humility. That stretch is sanctification.

Sanctification is not God shrinking you. It is God enlarging your capacity to carry glory. When God says, "Lengthen your cords," He is not only talking about reach. He is talking about readiness. He is not just preparing you for increase. He is preparing you to sustain it. If you feel stretched right now, it means something bigger is being trusted to you.

Not externally first.
Internally first.

God does not expand you outwardly until He has enlarged you inwardly.

So the real question is:
Do you want bigger results? Or bigger capacity?

Because God is less interested in increasing your visibility than He is in increasing your ability to sustain what He gives you. "Lengthen your cords" is not hype language.

It is sanctification language. You are not being stressed. You are being strengthened. And we do not build from survival anymore.

Echo, hear me clearly. Expansion is not about getting more space. It is about becoming more stable.

God will not waste inheritance on a container that cannot carry it. Before He expands your territory, He deepens your integrity.

Before He increases your influence, He strengthens your interior life.

Here's the original thought I want to leave with you:

"God enlarges your capacity before He enlarges your territory, because inheritance without formation turns blessing into burden."

If you feel the stretch, don't resent it.

Cooperate with it.

Because the stretch is not proof you're breaking. It's proof you're growing. Two Questions to Ponder This Week Where in my life is God stretching me internally that I have been mislabeling as pressure instead of preparation?

If God expanded my influence tomorrow, would my current character and disciplines be able to sustain it?

Echo, we are not building small anymore. We are lengthening our cords. Built Different.