



# THE RUNWAY

Part 1 • April 12, 2026 | Pastor Jason Smotherman

## **GIVING. SERVING. LIVING.**

### ***THE WAY WE RUN WITH THE WAY.***

We say it all the time, "I love my city." We put it on the lobby wall. We say it in conversations. We feel it when we drive through our town. It's also the reason our hearts break when we see the state of our city. Because deep down, we know...this can't be what God intended.

So we've prayed. We've given. We've volunteered. We've voted. We've gotten frustrated. All of those are signs that we love our city. Perhaps the most frustrating part of that love is realizing that, we don't have the capacity yet to achieve what God has given us the heart to pursue.

***But love isn't proven in what we feel. Love is proven in what we're willing to build.*** And if we really love our city, then we have to ask: Do we have the capacity to reach it?

#### ***MATTHEW 9:37 (NKJV),***

*Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few."*

***The problem isn't the harvest. The problem is capacity.*** Capacity is the space and ability to respond and carry something. Capacity is different than desire or potential, capacity is the ability to act upon desire and potential.

There is no shortage of need. There is no shortage of brokenness. There is no shortage of opportunity. The question is: Do we have the space and the ability to respond?

Every church has a runway. Let me define that clearly:

***The runway is our church's capacity to receive, sustain, and release what God sends.***

The gospel is the plane. The city is the destination. Generosity is what builds the runway. Generosity is where our time, talent, and resources converge with God's purpose for His Kingdom, manifesting in various aspects of our lives. And the runway determines everything.

Not every runway is the same length. Not every runway is the same strength. Not every runway has the same capacity. But every church has the same mandate: To spread the gospel and make disciples in our world.

Why is the runway so important? The plane is the gospel. The City is the destination. The Runway is where the gospel meets the intended destination.

**ROMANS 10:15 (ESV)**

*And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it's written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!"*

We are the Runway!

**1. THE RUNWAY DETERMINES WHAT CAN LAND**

Aircraft don't land based on desire. They land based on capacity. A plane doesn't circle and say, "I just feel like landing here." It needs length. It needs strength. It needs clearance.

If the runway cannot support it, it doesn't matter how valuable the cargo is. It cannot come down.

***The runway is defined by three things: Length. Strength. Clearance.***

And all three determine what can land, and what can take off. Length determines how much room there is for acceleration. A small plane can take off in a short distance. But something carrying weight, something carrying impact, something built for distance, needs more runway. Length speaks to capacity over time.

It's not just can we start something. It's can we sustain something.

Because reaching a city is not one event. Not one moment. Not one outreach. It's the sustained faithfulness (multiplication) that changes a region. It is sustained impact. And sustained impact requires runway. Generosity extends the runway.

Every time we give, we are not just meeting a moment. We are creating room for the future. Generosity doesn't just meet a need today. It creates capacity for tomorrow.

***Short runway = short impact. Extended runway = sustained transformation.***

Length gives you space. Strength determines what you can carry. Runways are engineered for weight. Because when something heavy lands, if the runway is not reinforced, it cracks.

Growth is exciting, but growth is heavy. More people means more needs. More influence means more responsibility. More ministry means more pressure.

Some churches pray for growth. But if growth landed it would break what's underneath. Strength is built through faithfulness, consistency, structure, and generosity.

Because generosity doesn't just expand us outward, it fortifies us underneath. God will not place weight on a runway that has not been built to carry it.

You can have length. You can have strength. But if you do not have clearance, nothing lands safely. Clearance means no obstacles. No debris. No interference.

Clearance is not about what we build. It is about what we remove. Because sometimes the issue is not what God is trying to send. The issue is what is in the way.

Disunity. Offense. Misalignment. Fear. Control. Wrong priorities.

You can have resources. You can have people. You can have opportunity.

But if there is no clearance, the plane circles and never lands.

God is not limited by what He wants to send. He is limited by what we are willing to clear.

And generosity plays a role here too. Because generosity breaks selfishness. Fear of lack. Inward focus. Generosity does not just give resources. It purifies motives.

***So if we are going to reach our city, we need length to sustain impact. Strength to carry weight. Clearance to receive what God sends.***

## **2. THE RUNWAY DETERMINES WHAT CAN TAKE OFF**

Runways are not just for landing. They are for launching. Anything powerful needs space to accelerate. No plane takes off at a standstill. It builds speed. It builds momentum. It uses the runway.

In the same way, if we are going to launch ministries, leaders, outreach, and missions, it requires runway. You can have calling, but without capacity, calling stays grounded.

## **3. THE RUNWAY MUST BE REINFORCED**

It's not just length. It's strength. Runways are engineered to handle pressure. Because when something heavy lands, if the runway isn't built for it, it breaks.

Some churches want more people. More growth. More influence. But growth brings weight.

***People bring complexity. Revival brings responsibility.***

And if the runway isn't reinforced through faithfulness, structure, and generosity, it cannot sustain what God sends.

## **4. THE RUNWAY IS BUILT PIECE BY PIECE**

No runway appears overnight. It is laid down intentionally. Piece by piece. Layer by layer.

Every act of generosity, is another piece of runway.

Every seed sown, is another extension of capacity.

You may feel like what you have is small. But small pieces build big runways.

And Jesus teaches this in Matthew 25. A master gives talents to his servants.

***Not equally, but intentionally. Each one received according to ability.***

What you have is not random. It is entrusted. He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much. God watches what we do with small runways before He extends them.

The faithful servants multiplied what they were given. They built.

He who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Giving is not loss. It is expansion.

***When we give, we extend the runway.***

Then the master returns and asks: "What did you do with what I gave you?" One servant says: "I was afraid, and I did nothing." He didn't lose it. He just never built with it.

Let me say something that will challenge every one of us: The answer for generosity toward the Kingdom is never zero. It should be equal, but it is never nothing.

If there is first a willing mind, God is not asking for what you do not have. But He is asking: What are you doing with what you do have?

Because zero generosity builds zero runway. Zero runway reaches zero people. Zero impact changes zero cities.

I love my city. So my answer will not be zero. I may not do everything, but I will not do nothing. ***I will build. I will give. I will invest.*** Because somewhere in this city right now, there is someone who needs what this house carries.

***We are not just building a church.***

***We are building a runway.***

And one day, what God wants to send will have somewhere to land.

And what God wants to release, will have somewhere to take off.

And when the Master asks: "What did you do with what I gave you?"

We will say: "We did not bury it. We built with it."

***And our city changed, because we built the runway.***