

Get Out of the Box!

by Andrew Strom

Andrew Strom's sermon emphasizes the transformative power of active service and returning to the principles of New Testament Christianity through community engagement in disaster relief efforts.

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Topics: "Faith"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of living out the mission of helping the poor and ministering to them with the gospel and the power of God. He describes the early church in the New Testament as a model for this kind of Christianity, where believers shared their possessions and met together daily in the temple courts. The speaker criticizes the modern church for being boring and lacking in true community and action. He encourages a radical change in lifestyle, including getting rid of distractions like television and prioritizing meeting together and serving others. The speaker concludes by stating that God is looking for new wineskins, implying that the church needs to adapt and change in order to experience revival.

Transcript

I just want to start by telling you a story about what happened down in Mississippi. This is only a year ago. Two weeks after Hurricane Katrina hit, I was at that time, I was doing some meetings up in Minnesota, and I was just driving in the car on my way to those meetings.

Katrina had just hit, I think, a couple of days beforehand. We were just getting the reports of how bad things were. And I just, you know, my wife just, I can't remember what happened, she just said something like, Wow, I wonder if people are going to go down there or something like that, I wonder.

And it was almost like something went into me, just a word from God, Man, you've got to go. You're going to have to go down there. And it kind of grew and grew in me over that weekend.

And I was saying to these young guys that were at this, it was like a training for young people in ministry to go out in the streets and stuff, which we did do. But I said to them, God may be calling some of you guys to come down. We're going to, we found an old RV, it was 1980s vintage.

It was, oh my goodness, I sometimes regret taking that thing down there. By the time I got it home, we'd scraped under trees and been in such damaging situations, that thing was just, actually on the way down

we had a blowout, it was the worst blowout I've ever seen. It blew half the plumbing off the RV.

It just blew it apart. It all came out, came off the, oh man, I don't even want to tell you about that. I knew I was going to have a blowout on the way home.

I just knew it, it happened. And luckily it wasn't that far from a tyre place. There's just something about that truck, man.

But anyway, it was exciting. It was an adventure. A couple of guys flew out.

I put it out on my email list. A couple of guys from California flew out to join us in Kansas City. Rick Walth, who I didn't know that well but administered with a little bit, Rick Walth came out, he just barely made it, just had enough fuel.

I think some guy gave him \$20 on his way down just to get him all the way to Kansas City. I said, if you can get to Kansas City, we've been given some donations to get us down there. So it was like we just threw this thing together in a matter of a few days.

We borrowed an old RV, jumped in a couple of vehicles, literally, and five of us guys went down to Mississippi not knowing what we were going to do, not really knowing anyone down there. My friend Darren Smith was already in the area, and he was just telling us how bad it was. You can't even describe it.

You go down to the beach first. The whole place was under martial law. We stayed with the Army the first night.

We stayed in the Army base, and there was curfews. We were 40 miles away from New Orleans. New Orleans was a disaster zone, but Mississippi was the centre of where it hit.

We were in places where a mile off the beach, people had been killed in their houses because they could not climb out of the first floor because the water came right up to the ceiling about a mile off the beach. This huge swell of water came up for three quarters of an hour, and it just sat there and then slowly went down. The house that we ended up using as a base had a ring right around it, five foot high on the wall, all around the entire inside of the house.

Every piece of furniture throughout the entire area was ruined. Every carpet was wrecked. When I got home, I said to my wife, have you cleaned the carpet? Because I'd not seen a clean carpet for so long.

You can't describe what it was like down the beach. You went down. There was a four-lane highway, and you just walked down, and it just ended.

The four-lane highway just dropped into the ocean. The whole thing had been ripped up. The entire bridge, it was gone.

And all the houses, there was nothing left. There was just flat concrete things. There was sometimes concrete pillars sticking up.

All down the beach, it was just splinters. The houses were just splinters. Some of them had washed across the roads, smashed into houses across the other side of the street.

There was boats everywhere. Every car in town didn't work. There was limousines on the side of the road. They had been filled with water. They had just floated, and they had just stopped where they landed, and they didn't work. Everybody just threw their cars away.

There was cars all over the place. And, of course, numerous people had been killed in that area, and the place was fairly empty. Red Cross was there.

The place was fairly empty. Many people had just left. If they could have gotten out, they got out.

And so, anyway, there we were, and God just led us to basically-- all we started doing was going around the people that were there that were trying to clean out their homes, which were just disastrous. There were trees down on all the roofs. We went around with chainsaws and started chainsawing trees off people's roofs.

And we made a policy. We pray with everyone that we help. So we would help them carry junk out of their house.

You'd have to strip these houses down. We didn't do all the stripping. We'd just carry the basic stuff out, get them started, and pray with these people.

And God was really there. There was a real spirit of, hey, something's going on down here. There's something really-- we're feeling that the Holy Spirit's strongly with us in this.

And these people said, listen, use our house. It's had five foot of water in it. You know, the washing machine-- I remember the washing machine was filled with water to the brim.

The thing was so heavy, all we could do was kick it over to the door and push it over. Push it over, all the water flooded out of it. Nothing was working.

I remember it was too dangerous. It was too dangerous to be in the houses. We were sleeping on air mattresses in the park across the street.

The houses were so dangerous to live in. There was people with babies and stuff sleeping outside their house with tarpaulins over them to keep them out of the weather. That was just across the way from us.

There was people sleeping in that park, straight across the road from where our base was. So we got given this base to use. It was just a four-bedroom house, and it was pretty much a wreck, but structurally very sound, structurally really good.

We just kind of did a basic strip of the thing, and that became Katrina Base. Eventually, they filled that thing with 50 bunk beds because they had so many people coming in to help. At the time, we had no idea that God was going to do anything.

I was there for two weeks. Rick and Nat were there for one week, and Rick said, I'm going to come back down. So if we get this base started, I'm going to come back down, and I'll commit to running it for a number of months.

I said, praise God, because I'm going to be gone. As soon as I get back, I'll start writing emails to everybody to start coming down, and we'll start helping these people. And, you know, it was good, solid

men's work.

We had ladies coming in as well, and they all helped. But I tell you what, there's nothing like getting crews of guys together with no agenda, not being paid. We never charged a cent.

Rick eventually was rebuilding whole houses, materials and everything, not charging people. He was getting stuff donated right and left, money donated right and left, crews coming in, and there was a huge construction thing going on, totally free, because most of the people that were insured, all their insurance companies and the government insurance company just wrote a lot of them off, didn't pay them anything, or they got \$30,000 to replace a whole house. It was just terrible.

Most of the people down there are totally underinsured. Most of the people have nothing. All their clothes are wrecked.

I mean, you've got no idea what it's like throwing an entire house out on the front lawn. You have no idea how much stuff that is. All of it's sodden and water.

Every piece of clothing is wrecked. Every piece of furniture is wrecked. All the photos are gone.

All of your life is destroyed. There's nothing left. And this is miles and miles.

It's like 50 miles of coastline was completely wiped out, totally wiped out. So, you know, we'd get in there, man. We were doing construction work every day.

That's what we were doing. We were like construction crews. It was fantastic.

It was good for me. I haven't done that kind of stuff since years ago when I did our house in New Zealand. I had to do all that stuff.

And when Rick came down, when all these crews started coming in, they started holding meetings every night. And eventually they put a tent up. First of all, it was a big tarp that was stuck up in the front yard of the house.

And then over the street in the park, he put up his tent, not a huge tent, but big enough to hold maybe 50 people or whatever. And they would have meetings every night in that tent. And when I say meetings, they started doing body ministry.

What's body ministry? It's where everybody ministers to one another. You might have some teaching and stuff, but basically the whole idea is, hey, who here needs some prayer for healing? Right, get up here. They have a hot seat.

You know, you grab the hot seat. Does this chair pull off here? All right, so stick people in the hot seat and you say, okay, everybody gather round. We're going to pray.

And anybody that feels like laying hands on so-and-so, you lay hands on them and pray for them. People started getting healed. Why are people getting healed? Because you're ministering to the poor.

You're pouring out and giving every single day for free for nothing. You're pouring into the community. You're not asking anything in return.

What are you doing? You're starting to get back to the principles of New Testament Christianity. This is what New Testament Christianity was about. You're getting away from churchy Christianity and you're getting back to New Testament Christianity.

We're going to look at this overhead in a second. I want to take us... This morning is going to be all about getting us to New Testament. Okay? Because we're not there.

This is not it. We're sitting in a little building, you know. The world's out there all going to hell.

They don't even care that we're in here today. This is not it. If we can't get back to New Testament Christianity, listen, there's a path out of where we're at into that thing.

Now, I'm going to describe that path to you today because it's not a very hard path to take. Alright? And it happened in Mississippi almost by accident. Rick said, you know, everything was by accident down there.

It was kind of like God just landed us in this situation where we had to start ministering to people this way. And, of course, you're giving away food. You know, Red Cross was giving us food.

In fact, truckloads would sometimes just turn up at the door. They'd go, Oh, you guys got a base down in Mississippi? Praise God, we're sending a truck down tomorrow. Next thing you know, you know, there's a truck.

We had to have storerooms fitted out in the house because it would be wall to wall, up to the ceiling of stuff to give away. And that kept happening all the time. And so there's food coming in and going out.

There's meetings happening every night where the Holy Spirit is starting to move. And Rick, who was just a revival guy, I remember ministering with him, and it was just straight, you'd go into a hall, you know, you'd hire the hall. This is the traditional stuff that was going on in his ministry.

And I would fit right in with it. Go into a hall, hire the hall, you know, you preach and take an offering, preach and take an offering, preach and take an offering, and off you go to the next town. That's the kind of ministry he was involved in.

Just revival, you know, 1970s style revival meetings. And praise God, I don't mind it. I'll preach anywhere, you know.

But that wasn't New Testament. He knew that. We all know deep down there's something wrong with the way we're doing stuff because it ain't working.

It's not affecting the world out there. It's not changing anything. It's not what Jesus would do.

Jesus arrived. He'd go to the poorest part of town. He'd say, okay, right, we're mobilizing into this part of town.

He'd get his disciples around and say, look, look at all these poor people. We'd better start feeding the poor. We'd better start healing the sick.

We'd better start casting out the demons. We'd better start getting out on the streets and getting into what we're meant to be doing over here. That's what Jesus would do.

In Mississippi, we just had to do that. It was a disaster area. I want to say to you, Detroit is just as bad.

Detroit is just as bad. I'm going down to Detroit because we're about to do in Detroit what we did down in Mississippi because God's leading us to do that. Detroit is our next thing.

But I want to say, the center of every major city, even smaller cities in America is the same way. They're all disaster areas. They're full of people that desperately need Jesus and they don't need the Jesus that just talks.

They need the Jesus that does and moves in power. Now, does the power come straight away? I want to say to the... No. The thing that comes first is the caring and the action.

And the power starts to flow after you get into that. If you're expecting that the power's going to be there on day one, you're going to walk out the doors and the first person you help... What will you notice the first person you help? You'll notice there's something going on. The Holy Spirit's there.

That's all we felt. There's something going on down here. The Holy Spirit's on us.

We're just like chainsawing and we're just like shifting furniture and clearing out mud. That was a lot of what we did. The mud was all contaminated.

We used so many bottles of bleach. We'd go through boxes of bleach. Boxes of... What do you guys call it? Chlor... Chlor... Chlorox.

Chlorox. Boxes of Chlorox. You know, just untold Chlorox.

Why? Because there's a huge scare of all the germs and contamination that had come straight in off that huge wave and was left everywhere. You'd walk on the grass. There was mud caked in the grass that had come in from that wave.

And... So... Okay. So we're starting to get hijacked into New Testament Christianity. And that's what was happening with Rick.

You know, every night those meetings started getting really powerful. Demons started getting cast out of people. The teams that were coming in were getting revived.

Why were they getting revived? It's because we took them out of this environment and stuck them in an environment where they are moving amongst desperately needy people every day. They're in Holy Spirit fellowship meetings every night. People are ministering by the power of the Spirit.

People that never ever have prayed for someone to get healed are praying for people. People are starting to get words of knowledge about people. So we'll stick someone in the hot seat and everybody's just praying.

And someone will go, You know, brother, I really feel that... you were rejected in a church that you were in and it's still affecting you and it's affecting your relationship with all the leaders that you're around. I want to pray over you about that right now. So and so will get a word about that person.

Bang! Next thing they're laying hands on them, praying for them. Person's breaking down, crying. People are getting healed.

People are getting touched and delivered. What are we talking about? We're talking about New Testament Christianity. The opposite of what we're sitting in most of the time.

Correct? Where did the New Testament church live? This is very important. Did they own any church buildings? Now, this is a crucial question. When were church buildings invented? Does anybody know? Anybody studied a little bit of history? Well, actually, the very first ones we find are dated about 200 AD.

In other words, we're talking 200 years after the heyday of the church. We find the first church buildings in history that we can discover and all they were was two houses joined together. That's the extent of it.

That's still a house church. 300 AD, we find the first purpose-built cathedrally kind of things. And, of course, when Constantine comes on the scene, Roman Emperor, and says, right, our Roman Empire is now a Christian empire.

What did they do? They converted all the pagan temples into churches, sometimes leaving some of the pictures of idols and stuff all over the walls. Did you know that? Where did we get our cathedrals from? Where did Roman Catholicism get its cathedrals from? Got it straight out of paganism. Didn't even hardly change a thing.

Changed the guys that used to worship pagan gods, they just changed their clothes and called them a priest. You guys know that? If we don't study history, man, we've got no chance of getting out of it, do we? What did Martin Luther reform? In the year 1500 AD, what was reformed in the church? He took away some of the Roman Catholic stuff, but not all of it. He kept the cathedrals, he kept the priest, just changed his name to pastor.

Listen, guys, if we don't know what is and isn't New Testament, we've had it. We're never going to find the real thing. How do we break out of what we're stuck in? How do we break out of it into the real thing? The real thing, I want to say this to you, this is the real thing, okay? Let me describe it again.

It's not like we set out to do this, it's just God hijacked us into it and we realized after a while, why is this so powerful? I know why it's so powerful. It's New Testament Christianity. God's hijacked us into New Testament Christianity.

Why? Because the need was so great, we couldn't do anything else. If we'd have just gone down there and even planted a house church, it wouldn't have been adequate. If we'd have gone down there and tried to build a church church, we'd have wasted all our time doing that.

We were forced by what was down there to change everything about what we did. And Rick realized over time, he goes, you know, why are we seeing the power of God? Why are people getting healed? Why did so-and-so get out of his wheelchair and walk? One of the guys that came down there who'd been shot in the back was healed and left Katrina Bays walking. He came in a wheelchair.

He used to drag himself to the walls and bang in the sheetrock on the walls out of his wheelchair. He left Katrina walking. There was people getting healed of diabetes and stuff like that.

Why is the power of God working here? You know, because we've been hijacked into New Testament Christianity. This is not the same junk that we do at home. And the teams that would come down were getting revived.

Why were they getting revived? Because they were being forced to leave churchiness behind and just get stuck in and help every day. There would be a list of places that had run up wanting help. Please come around and help us.

We don't know where to start. Our house is full of mold. Our house is full of mud.

And we're like 70 years old and we have no idea what to do. Please, if you can send someone around, please come and help us. And Rick goes, sure, two days, we'll be there.

And this is what the crews were coming down doing. So while they're doing that in the day, they would do street ministry for two hours in the late afternoon. And every night they'd have these meetings with the hot seats going on.

Rick might give a bit of a teaching or whatever on what the true gospel is, how to get truly saved. I think they baptized about 30 people while they were down there. Some of the Amish guys that came down.

Now, the Amish have a policy that if there's ever a disaster, they'll go. They have teams already in place. If there's a disaster anywhere in America, they send a team in.

But see, they didn't reckon on the Holy Spirit. So these Amish guys turn up. Of course, just traditional Amish guys staying in the camp.

And they're watching what's going on. God's moving every night and power in these tent meetings. And some of them start going, oh my goodness, this is God.

This is God. We've never seen anything like this. And they started getting converted.

Amish guys, they're not saved. Most of them aren't saved. They don't even believe in the Holy Spirit.

Some of them started getting delivered. Demons were coming out of some of them. Some of them, they saw healings in front of their face.

They saw the power of God getting demonstrated. Some of these Amish guys now, one of the guys was over in Pittsburgh. I met him.

He shaved all his beard off. He's got electricity in his house now. You can tell they get converted.

They get electricity at their house. There was whole groups coming down of Amish people and getting converted. They baptized 30 people in the ocean down there.

It's the New Testament. You just take him to the nearest water and baptize him. Dozens of people got filled with the Holy Spirit speaking in tongues.

Dozens. Probably hundreds. Rick had 1,500 people through that place.

Little four bedroom house. 1,500. Wow.

Praise God. I was amazed at what started happening. I just kept sending emails out and sending people down there.

That was my job. Praise God. I could tell that God was moving down there.

Now listen. How do we get out of our little thing? Seriously. How do we get out of it? We've already been talking about this this weekend.

What do we do? What's the definition of insanity? Have you ever heard that? The definition of insanity is doing the same old thing you've always done and expecting different results. What does this say? Things have changed around here. No, they haven't changed enough around here.

Same in all churches. When Rick came back, he's on fire with this message. He says when he was over in Pittsburgh, he spent all weekend preaching on the system is killing us.

The system is closing us in. We do our little systemy things. What does he mean by that? Well, he's been living in New Testament Christianity for a year, casting out demons every day, healing the sick, preaching the true gospel, helping people flat out every day, all day.

And he comes back and he's forced into the boxes that we put our Christianity in. And he can't stand it, man. Rick is just like, I cannot live in this stuff.

He used to be so comfortable in it. He used to go church to church. He was just a visiting preacher.

He'd do the revivals and all that stuff. He just can't stand. He doesn't want to live that way no more.

He wants to live in the real thing. What is the real thing? How does God hijack us into it? First thing we've got to get rid of is our concept that this building is the center of our Christian life. What is the center of our Christian life? I want to say to you, it is being out there helping people.

And as soon as we get out of this little box mentality that the whole church has got, we get out of the box mentality and start going, we don't exist to bring people into our box anymore. We exist to help all those desperate people out there and whatever it takes, we're going to do that. And from that you go, and the other thing that we exist to do is to gather together in the power of the Holy Spirit in places where they are likely to come join us.

Okay? These two things, if we change those two things, which are pretty simple things, we will start to break our stupid habits that revolve around this and take ourselves out of that and start revolving ourselves around ministering to people. Was church in the early days ever a building? No, church was always the people. You guys realize that.

Church never referred to a building. In fact, they did not have church buildings. Church was simply the people that gather.

Now, I put it to you, they would be concerned, ultra concerned, in every gathering they had about the poor. That's what it was all about in Jesus' ministry. That's what it was all about in the book of Acts ministry.

We are gathering and concerned massively about the poor. We will not do our little... I know how to set up churches. Believe me, I've been around church all my life.

I'm 40 years old now. I've been around church from before I was born. My father was a preacher.

My dad was trained in Bible college. We went to church. I've been to Baptist churches.

I've been to open brethren churches. I've been to Pentecostal and charismatic churches most of my life. Everything is basically set up the same way.

It takes an enormous amount of effort and energy. And I mean enormous, to keep this whole little thing running. It does.

Where should all that energy and effort be going? It should be going out there amongst the poor that really need it. Can we just switch on this overhead now? Where did the early church live? Okay. This is a picture of Herod's temple.

Actually, we should read a scripture before we go to this. Okay, just leave that up there. Turn with me to Acts chapter 2. There's several scriptures referred to this place where the book of Acts church used to meet in Jerusalem.

But we'll just look at one of them for now. Acts chapter 2, verse 42. This is describing the early church.

Now listen to this. They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching. Okay, so there's Rick down there preaching apostolic gospel, is what he was preaching.

Very strong on repentance. Okay, so, they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer. Very important.

Everyone was filled with awe and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. Notice again, we're already seeing how different this is to what we're living in, right? We're not seeing this stuff. We're not seeing this power going on.

All the believers were together and had everything in common, selling their possessions and goods they gave to anyone as he had need. So they're ministering to the poor. Notice that.

Selling their possessions and goods they gave to anyone as he had need. Now, what was the situation in that base camp down there? Did anybody call their stuff their own? No. Most of the guys that came down there with money, most of the people were giving it into the fund and saying, use this money.

You know, it would often get to the point where Rick had no food in the house to feed all the crews that day. And he'd be praying about it and saying, God, you're going to need to do something. I can't even feed the people that are here.

And next thing, God would do a miracle and food would arrive to feed them or somebody would give him some money and say, I really feel you need to feed the teams and I don't see, you seem to be running out of food and stuff, so I'm going to give you a couple of hundred dollars here. Go down to the, get some stuff from the supermarket or whatever. You know, originally when we went down there, nothing was open.

Everything was shut. Walmart wasn't even open. Nothing.

Anyway. So, they were living in this environment where everything is pushed into the mission. What's our mission? Our mission is to help the poor people.

It's to minister to them the gospel and the power of God. And we're going to start by just getting in amongst them and helping them practically. And out of that flows so much.

Okay. So, New Testament Christianity. By the way, this is the first and really one of the most important descriptions of the early church that we have.

Where were we? All the believers were together and had all things in common. Verse 45, selling their possessions and goods they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day, they continued to meet together in the temple courts.

Have a look over there. I'm going to talk about that in a minute. Every day, they continued to meet together in the temple courts.

On the left there is the temple courtyard. It is the size of five and a half football fields. That's how big it is.

That's where they're meeting. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. The Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

What are we lacking in this little picture? I'll tell you what we're lacking. You know, at risk of being a little bit sarcastic, you know, and they all came into church on Sunday on time and they sat in rows in the building and listened to the music and sang a few songs and paid the tithe offering and went home. That's what we're lacking in this description.

Are you guys with me on this? Listen people, we ain't got it. We've got something else. It requires a lot of energy to keep it going and the energy that we're pouring into keeping our Christian boxes going could be poured into the kind of thing that happened in Katrina and our lives would change.

All the people that went down there were writing back to Rick and saying, I have never had an experience like that in my life. My life is transformed by the week that I spent with you guys down there. It was like living in a revival.

It was like living in the New Testament. I'm trying to save up some money so I can bring another team of guys down because it's transformed my life. And I want to say to you, that could be happening here.

That could be happening everywhere we are. There's desperate people not far from here that we can do this with. There's teams of guys that are so bored with church.

I don't know about you, I find church monumentally boring. I've lived in real Christianity enough to be bored to death by church. I'm like Rick.

When you experience the real thing for a while and you try and come back, I'd rather be in a construction crew any day than have to sit in church every week. Any day. I'm not joking.

I want to go out there with the chainsaw and start chopping people's trees off their roofs than sit in buildings and talk about Jesus amongst ourselves and not reach the world. Any day. Because that's church.

If we can get out of our heads that this is church, I want to say to you, this is not church. If this was church, the power of God would be in here today. People, this is not church.

If we can get into our heads that Katrina was church, because we're just sitting there ministering to the poor and having meetings that are totally practical where everybody's ministering to one another and the

glory of God is falling and the power and the anointing is there every day, that's church. And that's Book of Acts Christianity. And we just described it and it sounds a lot like what happened in Katrina.

Amen. When you sit around and you're fellowshiping together around the meal table and the power of God is there and people are getting healed and the true gospel is being spoken and people are getting baptized in the ocean, that is church. And what we've got here is not.

And pastor, that is why it's not working. We've been discussing this all weekend. Why? Why do we not see revival? Because we ain't being church.

Are we capable of walking into it? Yes. If you're spirit filled and you preach a repentance gospel, you're already equipped, man. Pick up your chainsaw and go.

No joke. You'd fit right in. It's just that as soon as you got in there, you'd spend a day kind of getting used to, hey, this is a different environment.

This is a different environment. And after a day, you'd be used to it and you'd just flow with it, man. All the guys that came down did that, apart from a very few and they got booted out.

If you can't be around here and live in this environment and not kick up a stupid stink, you're out of here. I remember Rick said to me, it was a significant day, he said eventually after a few run-ins with a few stupid people that came through that wanted to do their own thing and be all flaky spiritually about everything, he just said he stuck up House Manager Rick Wolfe on the whiteboard and the next person that tried that on, he goes, well, I'm sorry, but if you can't fit in with what God is doing down here, isn't it obvious, can't you see? If you can't fit in, if you're going to be all whatever it is, you cannot be joining in with what God is doing here and flowing with the leadership of what's happening here and blah, blah, blah, on your bike. We'll see you later.

Praise God, I said. Amen, brother. Anyway.

Okay, you still have to have leadership. You still have to have people that are able to say, right, today we've got to do this and this and this, especially in that environment. Okay, all right.

Porticoes. When it says they were meeting every day in Solomon's Porch, I want to say to you they met in the most public place in all of Jerusalem. Peter and John would be standing under the... See these? This is the porticoes here.

They're standing in here. Peter and John are standing in here. They did have a few seats in the shade down here, but it's only about 40 feet wide as far as I remember.

I've looked up on all of this stuff. Okay, so Peter and John are standing in here and or maybe the other apostles every day. All of Jerusalem is passing by.

These, by the way, this roof here is enormously tall. It's 36 feet up in the air. Okay, so everybody, all of Jerusalem, this is the most popular thoroughfare, foot traffic continuously all day.

These guys are having a street meeting every single day. They're living in the faces. Why was it the early Salvation Army, they said, our home is in the open air.

Why was John Wesley, from the first great awakening, why was he an open air preacher? 30,000 gathering in the open air. Whitefield comes to America, open air preaching. Why? Well, they're in the long tradition of the apostles and Jesus and John the Baptist and all the other people we read about.

Okay, so here they are preaching in here. A massive crowd every day is joining. Remember, there's 3,000 even on the first day in the early church.

3,000 people are all gathered in here listening to them. Remember, where are the miracles happening? They're happening in front of all the people of Jerusalem. Down here, it's probably the Gate Beautiful, one of these gates.

Remember the lame man is in the Gate Beautiful. And Peter and John say a very significant thing for a preacher, especially considering American preachers. They say, silver and gold have we none.

American preachers have to go, silver and gold have I quite a bit and I also have quite a few investments and I have properties and I have a lake house and I have a boat. You know what I'm saying? Why do we not see the miracles? Because we're nothing like them. That's why we don't see the miracles.

So they grab the guy and they say, you know, silver and gold have I none, but in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. Now it says when everybody saw that miracle, they raced over to Solomon's porch. If you ever see a place where it talks about Solomon's porch or Solomon's portico, that's where Jesus preached when he was in town.

All the rabbis would preach there. It's up here. It's an open air meeting in the face of all Jerusalem and that miracle happened and everybody ran over to listen to Peter preach about it.

What am I getting at with this illustration? I'm simply saying this. These guys didn't shut themselves away in a box. They had open air Christianity going on.

They were ministering to the poor every day. They were in sight of all of Jerusalem every day preaching a powerful gospel with signs and miracles and wonders. That's where they were at.

Okay? Herod's temple right there. By the way, that courtyard is called the courtyard of the Gentiles and even Gentiles were allowed in there. They're not allowed in the main temple but they're allowed in that courtyard.

So even the Gentiles could be preached to in there. Okay. How do we get there? How do we get to New Testament Christianity? Listen, this is serious guys.

If you guys do actually want to live in this, if you want to impact this part of Michigan, what do you got to do? You got to get out of this. Get out of it. And you've got to find a practical way to be this.

And it doesn't involve building a temple by the way. The whole point of this illustration is simply those guys used what was already there in the public place. They didn't build their own building.

They paid nothing. They paid no rent anywhere. Early church paid no rent.

On the odd occasion when Paul came into town, I remember it says on one occasion they rented the school of Theosophists or something like that and Paul preached in there when he was in town. I think it was Ephesus or one of those places. Generally speaking, they would not pay any rent anywhere.

All of their money went to the poor. All of their efforts went to the poor. All of their energies.

It was a full-time mission. They lived the mission. They did not live church.

And there is an acreage of difference between those two things. God wants us to live the mission. If we start doing that, we have to leave this behind.

You cannot live them both. They both take up too much energy and money. Let me give you an example.

You're skilled in construction, brother, right? Say we have a team of construction guys from here that are patching up all the rundown and the houses that the homeless people around here live in. I'm just assuming there's homeless people living in. Most cities have this, but certainly the biggest cities have acres of it.

People are living in accommodation which you couldn't even call it accommodation. It's a rat hole. In the richest country in the world, there are millions of people living in rat holes and they can't afford to fix them.

They have no skills to fix them. They're drunk. They're on drugs.

There's prostitution. Imagine if we have construction crews. This is going to happen in Detroit starting in January, people.

Rick's coming up to Detroit to do this. So it's not theory. Say we have construction crews around here and say instead of this being our focal point, getting people into church is not the focal point of Katrina.

What is the focal point is ministering to people. We're no longer in the business of getting them into our box. We are in the business.

The mission becomes our business. The mission becomes our business. Our life starts to revolve around the mission.

Reaching the poor people, preaching the gospel, healing the sick, casting out demons becomes everyday. And it starts with helping them in physical, material ways. Reaching out to them.

Do you need food? Do you need shelter? Can we come in and repair your roof? I see that you've got a terrible leak in your roof, ma'am. Can we come in and help you repair it? Because we've got the equipment and we've got the guys that want to do it. You know, most men are leaving church.

Most men stay home. They send their wives along to church. This is a huge epidemic all around the western world.

Why is that? Because church is boring. Because half of it's kind of girly. Church is kind of girly.

I don't know if you've noticed that. You go to big conferences, it's kind of like everything's pink. There's flowers everywhere.

I don't want to be... Give me a chainsaw, man. And designate yourself a missionary to this area. Everything about your life will change.

And we have to meet together every night. We have to. We have to get our television screens and get the nearest axe and stick the axe through the television screen.

Because why do I say that? Even the innocent programs on TV are robbing us of the time that God wants us out there doing this stuff. They made a decision in Katrina, we are not going to have any television in here. Even when the power came on, which was about when I was leaving.

Even when the power came on, they could finally have a decent shower in place. Just when I was leaving, the generators arrived, etc. You know, no television.

We don't want that thing in here. That's going to soak up all our time. That's going to take away from our meetings.

We want to live in New Testament Christianity. How often did they meet down in this area? Every day. They met down there every day.

But you've got to realize, the rest of the time, they were out doing stuff. Helping people. Preaching the Gospel.

Healing the sick. Feeding people. They fed the widows of Jerusalem.

I said this last night. They fed the widows of Jerusalem every day. Can you imagine how many people that is? That's probably hundreds of people every day.

If we do nothing else but feed people, open up a kitchen somewhere in the middle of the worst part of town, and just say, we have a free meal here twice a week. You know, it's not that hard. My wife, we were doing homeless ministry in Kansas City.

We were feeding 100, 150, 200 people a week. My wife was just cooking up. She's a wonder, but she looked on the internet for recipes that can feed 100 or 150 people and chose the cheapest ones, and we do them every week.

Honestly, you get used to it. It's not even that hard after a while. You go to the local donut place and you say, have you got spare donuts at the end of the day that are not eaten? Can we have them? We're feeding the homeless.

They give you whole trays of stuff. The supermarket will do the same thing. Listen, this is not rocket science.

This isn't even hard. This is easier than what we're doing now. All of the energy that goes into this, all of the money that we're pouring into this, you know, and it's so ineffective.

Now, I'm not getting at this place. Listen, you guys invite us here because you want something to happen. A lot of churches in America, they don't want anything to happen, man.

It's total happiness with the box. And in fact, we're going to build a bigger box next year. Can we take up some special offerings for our next big box and we use it once a week or twice if we're incredibly committed? This is why we have no revival in America.

God is looking for new wineskins. The new wineskin is not a building. It's the people.

The people have got to change from being church focused to mission focused. And everything changes when you do that. And God starts moving in power.

Why do we have not many miracles happening in here? Because there's not many disastrously sick and demonized people in here. You guys all look pretty good. The sick and demonized people are always in the worst part of town.

Always. That's where they congregate. Every time.

There's 900,000 of them in Detroit. 900,000. All congregate in the center of town where it's the worst of the worst.

That's where God's sending us. Is it dangerous? Yes, praise God. A bit of danger.

You know, the great thing about going down to Katrina not knowing where we're going, what we're doing, it was like a huge adventure. If you take the adventure out of Christianity, do you have Christianity anymore? No, you do not. You have a sappy imitation.

If Christianity's not dangerous, it's not the real thing. We've got to go into the places where the gangs are. Do they respect God? Yes, they do.

In that black African community, you better believe they have respect for God. Their grandmothers are praying for them. You better believe it.

All their grandmothers are praying for them. You go up to a black guy sometime and say, is your mother praying for you right now? Someone will almost start to weep on the spot. The black church is huge in America.

All those grandmothers are praying for their grandkids. Their grandkids know it half the time. They know it.

There's going to be a revival one of these days. It's going to come to people that simply obey God, get up out of their chairs, tip the chair over, burn the chair, burn the building, and get out. Amen? Hey, I said last night, don't say amen unless you mean it.

Okay. Practical suggestions. These are the most practical things I can offer.

Practical suggestions. Form a construction team that goes and finds the very worst houses in a 20-mile radius and goes and talks to those people and say, we are from a ministry, Christian ministry. We do this for nothing.

Can we patch your roof? If they're drunk, it doesn't matter. If they're on drugs, it doesn't matter. What's the important thing? You're reaching out and you're showing the love of Jesus to these people.

Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. This is the great commandment, to love God first and to love others as yourself. What could be more loving than that? You find the poorest of the poor people in a 20-mile radius.

You have a construction crew. They do it all the time. All the time.

Second thing. Start up meals. Start up meals for the homeless people or the poor people where you're feeding them for free.

Find a building or a run-down, empty, abandoned place somewhere in the middle of the worst part of town and start up a free meal there twice a week or something. And while they're eating the free meal, you're

having testimonies. There's people up the front just giving their testimony of how God took them out of drugs.

God took them out of this. God took them out of that. It's not rocket science, people.

It doesn't even cost much. It costs next to nothing to do that. In the summertime, you can do it in parks.

In the wintertime, you just need some place. It doesn't matter what it is. Third thing you need to pray about.

Getting rid of the building. Is this building scriptural? I want to say to you, no church building in America is scriptural. None.

They waste literally billions upon billions upon billions that otherwise should go to the poor. There is no excuse for us doing what we do. We do it out of habit.

We do it out of tradition. It has to go. Should we then meet together? I'll tell you one thing that is even more powerful than meeting in a home.

I'm not very big on house meetings just for the sake of house meetings. I'm not very big on them because to me they're just as ineffective. They're just another box.

I want to see the people in the house meetings doing stuff out in the real world. I'm not interested in house meetings for their own sake. I'm more interested in a porch meeting or a front yard meeting than I am a house meeting.

In Katrina, that was the difference between a lot of powerful stuff happening and not happening. People, you've got to realize the house church movement, in my opinion, has not got it. They haven't got it.

If they're about houses, I'm not interested. I go in those places. I serve them up the kind of stuff I'm talking to you guys about.

Give them a good old kick where it's going to motivate them because I'm just not interested in that kind of Christianity. Let's all get together in a house. What does it end up being? Well, let's have a coffee morning, shall we, while the world goes to hell.

You know what I'm saying? I'm not against coffee mornings. I'm just trying to give you a house meeting to me. Okay, so what are you doing? That's what Rick says to them.

He goes to the house meeting guys. He goes, they get really offended. He goes, yeah? Oh, great.

You're meeting in a house? So what are you guys doing? And they look. We're meeting in houses. And he goes, yeah? Yeah, so what are you doing? What are you guys doing? What are you doing? Answer is, of course, nothing.

We're doing nothing for what we're doing or next to nothing. Listen, man. But houses are a better option than this.

And porches, in my opinion, I hope there's a porch revival one of these days where everybody sits on their porch, invites their neighbors over, and says, we're going to sing some songs to God, and we're going to get together around the fire, we're going to have a fire on the yard, and we're going to invite all our sick.

Now, what did you say? Invite the sick and the lame and the poor and have a big feast and give all the food to them. We could have revivals on the front lawns all around America.

Seriously. The thing that I'm trying to get at today is our mindset changing. Our mindset is the most important thing.

Getting rid of the building doesn't automatically do a thing unless our mindset changes and we start to be missionaries. Then everything will change. Early next year, if you guys want to go down and see this in practice because this is exactly what is about to happen in Detroit, they will be and already are in many ways living in this right now.

That's why Patrick now has a healing anointing. And Joseph, you started seeing some healings as well? Okay. Why does God give healing anointings to people that are out there helping people? Because it's the most obvious candidate to give a healing anointing to.

God's looking around the earth. He goes, okay, I've got 1,000 healing anointings. I've got to give 900 in the third world because they're actually doing stuff.

And I've got 100 left for the Western church. Do we see? No. No.

Detroit. Praise God. There's a few guys.

There's a few guys down there. They're out ministering to the homeless and they need to cast out some demons and heal some sick people because there's desperately ill people all over that territory. I'm going to give one to them.

That's it. Because he's not stupid. He gives it to people that need it, that are out there doing the stuff.

Amen? Get out there and care for people. You'll be amazed at how God starts to move. When you need a deliverance anointing, you'll probably get one.

If you never need one, you probably ain't going to be a candidate. I'm sorry. Pray all you like.

Most of our prayers are a complete waste of time. God's saying, do something different, please. I'm waiting for you to become missionaries.

Then I'm going to give you the things you've been praying for for 20 years. Please, come on. Amen? Amen.

I like the sound of that amen. It's pretty quiet, but I think it means something. Okay.

So, practical suggestions. Again, you need to pray about this building. You need to pray about how you can become a mission.

You notice that a mission group is set up differently from a church. When you go on a missionary thing, you set up differently. It's all about the mission.

This, what you guys have in here, needs to be set up differently because it's got to be all about the mission. You might find you get rid of this building and get a \$200 building down in the slum somewhere that is far more suited to the mission than this is. You know what I'm saying? Because if it comes about the mission, all your decisions change.

You go, is this going to serve the mission? Yes, it is. Let's do it. God's going to supply.

Praise God. Amen? All right. Let's pray, people.

Because I think once you start on that path, God will show you stuff. And it will be practical and you'll just be able to do it. Let's just everybody stand up.

Let's just stand up together. It's always good to stand and pray. Father God, I just pray for a practical application of everything we've spoken about today.

God, please make us missionaries. People, if you want God to designate you as a missionary, I want you to raise your hands to Him right now as we're praying, okay? I want to be designated as a missionary, so I'm raising my hand. Father God, I pray for all of us who want to be missionaries and not just church Christians anymore.

God, make us missionaries. Send us forth. Change the way we do things.

Change the way we use our money. Make us the early church. Make us the New Testament church, God.

Let our meetings not be about coming to church on Sunday or whatever night it is, Wednesday night. Away with the things that aren't about the mission, that aren't directly helping the mission. Let us become early church Christians where they gather together all the time, and it was always in the power of the Holy Spirit with God touching people and healing people.

God, make us like that where everything we're into, everything we're pouring into is about Your mission that You give us in the earth. Reaching out to the poor and the needy. Feeding them.

Healing the sick by the power of Jesus. Preaching a powerful repentance gospel. God, You've already equipped us to do these things.

Just change our environment. Show us how to change our environment and to break off the yoke of tradition. The yoke of tradition which is so binding on us.

Why do we dress up and go to church? My goodness, what's wrong with us? We dress up and go to church. God, yank it off us that instead of going to church, we are the church and we go out into the world. Make us missionaries, God.

Change us, we pray. Bless us with opened eyes to see what real New Testament Christianity is and is not. And let us leave behind the old and become new wineskins in You, God, in Jesus Christ.

Oh, Father, anoint this assembly to become absolutely a New Testament church in every way. Let us glorify You in this community and shine a light that is unforgettable that everybody here talks about in this whole area, God. Those people who are serving Jesus and helping people out there in the mission field which is all around us, God.

We pray these things in Jesus' mighty name. Amen. I keep telling Andrew that I wish he'd get a little tougher on us.

I'm going to quit saying that. You may be seated for just a minute. Wow.

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