

Answering The Call

by Brian Long

This sermon emphasizes the importance of answering the call of Jesus, focusing on the commandments of repentance, belief, and following Him. It highlights the need to carry the compassion of Christ, be willing to be inconvenienced, and be blessed and broken to feed the hungry. The speaker shares personal stories and biblical examples to illustrate the significance of surrender, compassion, and obedience in serving God and reaching out to others.

Scripture: Mark 1:14, John 10:27, Mark 6:30, Amos 8:11

Topics: "Answering the Call of Jesus", "Compassion in Service"

Description

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Transcript

Praise the Lord. What an incredible time together, brothers and sisters. God is so awesome, is He not? He is so glorious.

Last night I was just trying to jot down a few things, thanking people who I know are praying for us. And I started writing and my fingers couldn't go fast enough. All the things that the Lord has been doing, it's just incredible.

We stand in awe of Him. We stand in awe of His greatness, His goodness, His glory, glory to His name. Thank you so much for that song.

Praise the Lord. Let's go to Mark chapter 1 today. Mark chapter 1. Maybe we could just have another prayer, just a thanksgiving here too, before we get into the message.

Father, we are so very, very grateful for who You are. We are so thankful, Father, for all that You've done and all that You're doing. Lord, my heart is overwhelmed with Your goodness, with Your mercy, with the glory that You have displayed, O Lord.

It's all of You. You are God and there is none like You. There is none beside You.

And Lord, we thank You so much for once again allowing us just to open up Your words of life. And may we hear Your Word as it is, coming straight from Your heart, directly from Your throne, O Lord. You want to speak to us once again this morning, as You send us out.

And I pray, Lord, that Your Word would go forth clearly, without any hindrances, that Your Spirit would flow freely. Lord, have complete control of me, of us all. Open our ears and our hearts to receive what You have to say to us, Lord.

And give us the grace to respond to Your call. In Jesus' name, Amen. This morning, answering the call.

Answering the call. Who will answer the call? Mark chapter 1. Our Lord Jesus issues a clear call to all who will hear it. And I want you to see the first words of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark.

Mark here, we'll begin reading in verse 14. Now after that, John was put in prison. Jesus came into Galilee preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God.

And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent ye, and believe the Gospel. Now as He went by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew, His brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishers.

And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after Me, and I will make you to become fishers of men. And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed Him. A clarion call that comes also as a commandment from our Lord Jesus Christ.

We have three commandments here, if you'll notice in verse 15 to 17. Three commandments directly from the Lord. And this is the call, this is the commandment.

Repent, believe, and follow Me. Repent, believe, and follow Me. The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand.

Repent, and believe the Gospel. Then He says to them in verse 17, Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men. Brothers and sisters, what God has joined together, let man never separate.

There's another Jesus, another Gospel being preached today that says, Just believe, no repent, no follow, just believe. What God has joined together, let man not separate. Repent, believe, follow Me.

He has married those together as He has married husband and wife, man and woman together. And what He joins together, let no man, let nothing separate. Each of the twelve disciples all heard the same call.

Follow Me, follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men. The truth is, you cannot be, I'm going to say something that may shake you, you cannot be a real Christian and not follow Jesus. You cannot be a real Christian.

You can find many churches and many other pastors or preachers who will tell you otherwise, but it's a lie. You cannot be a real Christian and not follow Jesus. Are you sure about that, Brother Brian? Listen to the words of our Lord Jesus Himself.

John chapter 10, verse 27. He said, My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. They follow Me.

One of the brothers was just sharing with me earlier about a video that he watched where there was a flock of sheep, and there were several different people with different voices, all calling at the sheep, and the sheep never lift their head. They never pay any attention. And then the shepherd of those sheep opened his voice, and all of a sudden the sheep lift up their heads, and they follow the shepherd.

Incredible. Their ear is in tune with the shepherd. It's almost the same with cattle.

I remember working on a ranch one time. I just hired on with this old man, and when it was wintertime, you called the cattle to come to the feed. And I remember going out that day with him, and I thought, well, I'll go ahead and start calling.

So I called the way we call cattle, and the cows never even lifted their heads. And I found out, what in the world is wrong with these cattle? And then this old man let out a call that I'd never heard before, and all the cows lifted their head, and here they come to the feed wagon. They knew his voice.

Jesus said, my sheep, my sheep hear my voice. They know my voice. They hear my voice.

I know them, and they follow me. Now, we turn to Mark chapter 6, just a few chapters over, where following Jesus becomes practical and lived out in real life. And that's what I feel especially the Lord wanting us to say today.

Practical and lived out in real life. Mark chapter 6. And this is going to come with another question, and that is, not only who will answer the call to follow Him, but who will feed the multitudes? Who will feed the famished? Mark chapter 6, we begin reading in verse 30. And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught.

And He said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while. For there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat. And they departed into a desert place by ship privately.

And the people saw them departing, and many knew Him, and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and out went them, and came together unto Him. And Jesus, when He came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep, not having a shepherd. And He began to teach them many things.

And when the day was now far spent, His disciples came unto Him and said, This is a desert place, and now the time is far past. Send them away, that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread. For they had nothing to eat.

He answered and said unto them, Give ye them to eat. That is, you give them something to eat. And they say unto Him, Shall we go and buy two hundred penny worth of bread and give them to eat? He saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? Go and see.

And when they knew, they say, Five and two fishes. And He commanded them to make all sit down by companies upon the green grass. And they sat down in ranks by hundreds and by fifties.

And when He had taken the five loaves and the two fishes, He looked up to heaven and blessed and break the loaves. And He gave them to His disciples to sit before them. And the two fishes divided He among them all.

And they did all eat and were filled. And they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments and of the fishes. And they that did eat of the loaves were about five thousand men.

We learn from Matthew's gospel it was five thousand men besides women and children. So there could have very well been nearly ten thousand people here. Maybe there were ten thousand people.

The disciples are overwhelmed after a long day of Jesus ministering to them. And so they say in verse thirty-five, This is a desert place. It's a deserted place.

It's not the right place. And besides that, Lord, it's getting late. It's not the right time.

Send them away. But Jesus issues the call in verse thirty-seven, No, you give them something to eat. You give them something to eat.

The call was follow me and I will make you fishers of men. The call here lived out in practicality is now you give them something to eat. Who will hear and answer this call to feed the famished? I want to say to you, brothers and sisters, there's another kind of famine today.

There's another kind of famine today. Yes, we're to feed the hungry and minister to the poor, and especially in the household of God, in the family of God. But there's another kind of famine even more serious than a lack of bread.

And I'll read it to you from the book of Amos quickly. You don't need to turn there. If you want to jot it down, you can.

But in Amos chapter eight, in verse eleven, the scripture says, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread nor thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord. And they shall wander from sea to sea and from the north even to the east. And they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord and shall not find it.

And that's happening today. So many are searching for the hearing of the word of the Lord, and they're not finding it. They're hearing all kinds of philosophies and all kinds of man-centered teachings.

But where is the true rhema word of the Lord, the gospel of Jesus Christ? And so there's a famine. There's a famine going on, not of bread, but of the hearing of the word of the Lord. Now, who will answer this call to feed the hungry, to feed the multitudes? I want to ask you three questions this morning that the Lord has given to me that I've had to ask and answer myself.

And without answering these, without the answer to these questions becoming a reality in our lives, the truth is we'll never really follow Jesus. And we'll never really feed the multitudes. First question is this.

Are you willing to carry the compassion of Christ? Are you willing to carry the compassion of Christ? In other words, are you willing to receive from him a broken heart? Are you willing to receive a broken heart? Are you willing to carry the compassion of Christ? Notice the difference between the disciples and their master. Jesus, when he came out in verse 34, saw much people, was moved with compassion toward them. He saw them, and what he saw, his eyes affected his heart.

And he was moved with compassion for them because they were like sheep having no shepherd. The disciples saw the same people, but they were missing something. They were missing the compassion of God.

They were missing the heart of God. And I say to you again, my friends, if we are void of the compassion of Christ, we are not walking in real Christianity. I don't care how much Bible knowledge you have.

I don't care how well you can preach or sing or pray or anything else. If you are void of the love of God, the compassion of Jesus Christ, you're missing the boat. They were missing it.

They were void. They did not have yet a broken heart. That's why they say, send them away, Lord.

Let them buy themselves something. They were missing the heart of God. Jesus, our Lord, is one who is moved with compassion.

And you see it all through the Scriptures. In Mark chapter 1, he comes up. There's a lonely leper in great need.

And he cries out to the Lord, Lord, if you'd be willing, you can make me clean. The Bible says Jesus moved with compassion, touches that dirty leper, and says, I am willing. Be clean.

And he was healed. Two blind men cry out to him. Lord, thou Son of David, have mercy on us.

And Jesus heard their cry and stood still. What do you want me to do for you? Lord, we want you to open our eyes. Jesus moved with compassion, the Scripture says.

Touched their eyes. They opened their eyes and caused the blind to see. There was a widow from Maine.

A widow. Husband is gone. Now her only son died.

And Jesus saw them walking down the street. Look right there with the casket. This broken-hearted mother.

Most people would say, oh, bless her heart. Walk on. Poor lady.

Her son died. Jesus saw it. It's something, it was so different with him.

Moved with compassion. He approaches them and touches the casket. Raises that dead boy to life.

He was moved with compassion. Well, it's one thing to have compassion for a leper, for blind men, for a widow who's just lost her only son. But what about a demon-possessed man? A man possessed with so many demons, the demons were called legion.

Jesus delivered that man. And that man came and sat at his feet in his right mind. Jesus said, you go home and tell what great things God has done for you and how he's had compassion on you.

Compassion is throughout all the Scriptures, brothers and sisters. And we cannot follow Jesus without it. We cannot follow him and we cannot feed anybody without a broken heart, receiving a broken heart from him.

I remember one time when the Lord began to work this in me personally. I was actually pastoring a church and I was pleading with the church that we need to become a people of prayer, a house of prayer. And so one night at prayer meeting, we were gathered in a room and we had been praying.

And I said, I want us to finish with one more focus, one prayer that we can unite with and come together in one accord and bring before the Father. And that prayer is this. Lord, bring someone across our path this week who is in need of you.

Bring someone across our path this week who is in need of you. And we prayed. And just as I said amen, there was a knock on the door.

Incredible how God moves sometimes and how quick he moves. Just as I said amen, come in, the door opened. And I'll never forget what my eyes saw.

I was totally not expecting it in the panhandle of Oklahoma. A man came in. He was a man, but he was dressed as a woman.

He had woman features. He was dressed as a woman. It was clearly he was a man.

And I said, can I help you? He says, I'm wanting to see if I can talk to the pastor. I said, well, that's me. And I walked out and introduced myself, told me his name was Pamela.

And I said, what's the problem? He said, well, it's dark out here. He said, I just turned the corner and my headlights went out. He said, I just wanted to see if I could have permission to pull into the parking lot here, the church, and spend the night in my van.

When it gets light in the morning, I'll be on my way. I said, sure, we'd be glad to let you spend the night here. And I said, but not only that, I said, we could help you get your headlights fixed in the morning.

There's a car parts store just not a block away from here. And we began to talk and I began to ask him if he had any spiritual beliefs and just trying to open the door. And to be honest, brothers and sisters, what I saw absolutely disgusted me.

It disgusted me. And just to be honest, I was disgusted. I didn't want to get close to him.

And as I'm as he's talking and he's talking, just rattling off very, very fast. All of a sudden, God broke my heart. And, you know, you know what I saw all of a sudden.

I saw this man turn into a little boy. He was a little boy. He was somebody's son at one time.

I saw this little boy just quick like that. And I said to him, what happened to you? You've not always been this way. And he said, have you got time for me to tell you all this? I said, please tell me.

He said, when I was a little boy, I was skinny. I was not good at sports. I was always made fun of.

I was called that name. And he said, my mom was a Pentecostal preacher. And she was so convinced I had demons of homosexuality.

And she would beat me almost every day. Thinking that physically she could beat these demons out of me. And I saw a wounded, beat up little boy.

I no longer saw this transvestite standing before me. And I said, he said, I said, what happened? He said, well, she dropped me off one day finally at a psychiatric hospital. And I never saw her again.

She never came back. He said, I do have some spiritual beliefs. Because there was a nurse there who was a pagan witch.

And she took me in her home. And so I believe in many different. And he went to tell me all this stuff he believed.

I said, I'm going to pray. We're going to pray for you tonight. And I told him the truth.

I said, we had just asked God to bring someone across our path. It was in need of Him. And your headlights went out.

What kind of coincidence is that? I said, you sleep here tonight in your van. But I'm going to plead with God to reveal to you who He really is. And His love.

And I said, in the morning we'll meet. Well, I went home and got on the phone. And I called the people of the church that I knew, prayed.

I said, we're going to cry out to God tonight like never before. That God reveal Himself to this man. And God is a God who works wonders, brothers and sisters.

He works miracles. Sometimes when you tell it, it's almost hard to believe. But we prayed that night.

And that morning I came to the parking lot and He was standing outside of His van. Just pacing. I said, did you sleep well? Hoping He would say no.

I said, did you sleep well? He said, not really. I said, really? And His eyes were great big. He said, did you see that storm come over last night? I said, no, I didn't even notice.

I noticed it rained a little bit. He said, no sooner than I dozed off. He said, I think lightning hit my van or it hit right next to my van.

He said, all of a sudden I heard a boom. And light filled up. And He said, I was so scared all night I didn't sleep a wink.

I said, God did that. He's wanting to get your attention. But He was still closed.

Totally closed to the gospel. So we went down to the car parts store. And we bought the bulbs and whatever we needed to fix the lights.

Mind you, we're in western Oklahoma. Proud farmers, ranchers, cowboys. And here I am.

I was embarrassed. God was really breaking me. Really breaking me.

But it gets worse. We fixed the lights and my heart is breaking. Moving with compassion.

It's not coming from me. It's coming directly from the throne of God. Directly from the heart of Jesus.

And we were standing out. He had to park right in front of the door. We were standing right out front of the door.

And people were going in and out looking. And the Lord says to me, not in an audible voice, but directly to my heart. I want you to put your arm around Him.

And I want you to pray. And I said, Lord, I don't want to do it. I don't want to do it.

All these people going in and out. And with this conviction and compelling from the Lord. I said, I never would call Him Pamela.

I said, it's not your name. And I said, would you mind if I put my hand on you and just prayed over you right now. That God would continue to reveal Himself to you.

I want you to come and meet my Jesus. And he said, sure. And I put my arm around Him.

And something happened. Knowing men would be mocking this preacher. Looking at him in shame.

Walking in and out. Seemed like that store was busier that morning than ever before. And I remember putting my arm around Him.

And the Lord God absolutely breaking my heart. And the love of God pouring forth like a river. Praying over this man.

His eyes would be open to see Jesus. And when I looked up, he had tears just running down his face. I cannot say that he fell on his knees and repented.

He showed me his ID. He said, I'm from Hollywood, California. He showed me his license and that's where he was headed.

He got in his car and he drove away. I've never seen him since. But the Lord taught me something that day.

That if I'm going to serve Him. I've got to be willing to receive a broken heart. I've got to be willing to receive the compassion of Christ.

I've got to be willing to allow Him. And when He does that, brothers and sisters. He's going to put you in positions you may not want to be in.

And, you know, when Jesus looked at a crowd. He never just saw a crowd. He saw faces in the crowd.

He saw individuals. He didn't miss the person for the crowd. You know one great difference I see today in so many.

Between churches like this. And I give God glory. I'm not boasting.

I'm not lifting you up. But the Lord and what He's doing here. But the difference between that and so many big churches with celebrity pastors.

They love to see the crowd. But it seems that they couldn't care less about the person in that crowd. Who is lost.

Lonely. Broken. Defeated.

Jesus saw all that. And He was moved with compassion. You know, you and I will see others through one of two eyes.

Either through eyes of compassion. Or through eyes of criticism. Condemnation.

And the way you look at someone. Determines who you're really in fellowship with. Because the devil also looks at crowds.

But he never ever looks at them with compassion. There is no compassion in the heart of Satan. There is no compassion in the heart of a devil.

And so when we look at people. And we're moved with criticism. Just tearing them apart in our mind.

Criticizing them. Condemning them. It is clear we are in fellowship with the devil.

God have mercy upon us. Are you willing to carry the compassion of Christ. And begin to see people as you've never seen them before.

You say, Lord I don't have it. None of us have it. In and of ourselves.

And that's why we go to the throne of God. And we say, Lord I need you to touch my eyes. I need you to touch my heart.

Remember when the Lord took the one blind man. And He spit in his eyes. And He said, now open your eyes.

What do you see? He said, Lord I see men but they're like trees walking. Some of us see people like that. Just a tree.

There's no soul. No feeling. No nothing.

Just when people just become a project. So He touched them again. Ah, now Lord.

I see all men clearly. I see what you see. And that's what we need brothers and sisters.

We need the Lord Jesus to touch our eyes again. Some of us. So that we begin to see people as He sees them.

Question number one. If you're going to follow Jesus. Are you willing to carry His compassion? Question number two.

Are you willing to be inconvenienced? Are you willing to be inconvenienced? It was very inconvenient for the disciples. It's not the right time. It's not the right place.

There's a deserted place. It's late now. Send them away.

Such an inconvenience. Let them feed themselves. But Jesus was always willing to be inconvenienced.

And you must be willing to be inconvenienced if you're going to follow Him. You've got to be willing to be interrupted. Nicodemus could come to Him in the middle of the night.

And the Lord opens the door. Little children. The disciples must say.

Little kids. Shut up. Be quiet.

This is an important man. Leave him alone. They certainly said that to the blind men that were crying out.

Hold your peace. Shut your mouth. Don't you know who this is? And the Lord was always willing to be inconvenienced.

He was willing to be interrupted. He only did what the Father told Him to do. But what the Father tells you to do will usually require you to be inconvenienced.

It goes against your comfort zone. It goes against convenience. Jesus was always so approachable and yet there was no one so holy.

Are you so holy that you can't associate with some? Now make no mistake, new believers. Bad company corrupts good morals. You need to be wise in that.

They're not pulling you down. But you know what I'm saying. This holier-than-thou attitude.

God forbid. That's a stench in the nostrils of God. Never forget where you came from.

As a sister preached to us, level playing field. There's level ground at the cross. Don't forget where you came from.

Even if you're dealing with a transvestite or whatever sin may disgust you. Yes, the sin should. We should never condone or love the sin.

But behind that, remember where you came from. Did God come for the lovely? Did he come for the healthy? Jesus said, you healthy people, you don't need a doctor. I came for the sick.

Those who are willing to acknowledge I am in need of a savior. Are you approachable? Are you willing to be inconvenienced? Are you willing to put others first? Jesus didn't say, okay, boys, y'all go ahead and eat. Get your bellies full and then we'll feed the multitudes.

No, he said, you feed the multitudes. You feed. And then afterwards you gather it up.

And how many baskets did they have? Twelve. And how many of them were there? Twelve also. You never lack when you serve the Lord.

He always, when you open your hand, you'll find that the Lord always fills it back up. Here's the final question. It's two parts.

You say, am I willing to be, am I willing to carry his compassion? Am I willing to be inconvenienced? Now, what did Jesus do with the bread? He took it in his hands, first of all. He blessed it. And then he broke it.

And if you and I are ever going to feed the hungry, if we're ever going to feed the multitudes, if we're ever going to reach men, the officials of men, we've got to be willing to be blessed and we've got to be willing to be broken. Are you willing to be blessed and are you willing to be broken? Somebody said, of course, who wouldn't want to be blessed by God? But what does that mean? That means you have to be placed completely into the hands of Jesus. The bread is not blessed until it's placed into the hands of Jesus, which requires surrender, which we saw much of last night.

But maybe while you saw others surrendering, you're still saying, I'm not there. You've given Jesus one hand or you've given him whatever, one eye. He'll give it right back to you.

It's all or nothing. Are you willing to be placed completely into the hands of Jesus? And when you are, he blesses you. And we're blessed, brothers and sisters, only for the purpose of being a blessing.

Never to hoard. There is nothing self-centered about the Christian life. Nothing at all.

The Bible says in 1 Corinthians chapter 13 of love, that great love chapter, there's one thing that always stands out there to me and gets a hold of my heart. Love seeketh not her own. It never seeks its own.

Lust takes. Love gives and gives and gives some more. It never seeks its own.

So we're blessed for the purpose of being a channel of blessing. Corrie ten Boom says, I've learned to hold all things loosely. Because it I've learned it hurts when God has to pry open my fingers.

Hold it loosely. And I guarantee what you you find out when you shovel out to serve others. God is shoveling in and his shovel is always a lot bigger than yours.

That is for sure. He is a faithful God. That little boy, if he would held on to that lunch.

Lord, I can't. This is this is my lunch. If I give this to you, I'll go hungry.

How many people would even fed himself? Maybe one or two more. But what if I give all to Jesus? He fed a multitude. You say I'm not much.

It's listen, it's not about us. It's not about us. That plate wasn't much.

But what was said on it was pretty good. We give him all we come as we are. Lord, I surrender to you.

I'm willing to be placed into your hands. Bless me. Fill me with your spirit.

Baptize me with your spirit. Let your rivers of living water flow through me and the Lord will bless us. But it's not just are you willing to be blessed? Are you willing to be broken? Are you willing to be broken? The bread could not feed anybody until it was broken.

Are you willing to be broken of stubborn pride? Of selfishness? Of a hard heart? Of having no compassion? Of doing everything my way? Brokenness is essential in the kingdom of God. But what does it look like really? We talked about breaking that earthen vessel. But I want to give you another picture today.

What does brokenness really look like in the kingdom of God? Something that speaks volumes to me. And it's probably just because of my background. But hopefully it will speak to you as well.

There's a tremendous difference between a well-broke horse and an unbroken horse. And I've ridden both of them. And so an unbroken horse has a hold of the bit.

He stiffens his neck. He clenches his jaw. He's got all this power and strength.

But he's going to go where he wants to go. Do what he wants to do. He might buck.

He might kick. He usually will hurt somebody. He's totally out of control.

But what is a broke horse? There's nothing like riding a broke horse. This brother asked me if I considered some of my animals my friends. I didn't tell you about the horse.

There's nothing like riding a well-broke horse. A well-broke horse that is so yielded to the master. The slightest touch to stop, and he stops.

The slightest pressure on his neck of the rein to turn, and he turns. The slightest cue to move forward, and he moves forward. He is in complete control because he's broken.

It's no longer my will, but thy will be done. Wherever you tell me to go, whatever you tell me to do, there's a scripture, a verse in the Psalms where God says, I will guide you with my eye. What does that mean? I will guide you with my eye.

I no longer have to use a two-by-four. It's God just with his eye. You know how some of us, we can look at our children, and they know what that means.

Just the eye? I will guide you with my eye. The slightest pressure. The slightest nudge.

Oh, yes, Lord. Put all of that down, and come sit at my feet. Yes, Lord.

Or go. It's time to go. I'll tell you, brothers and sisters, something incredible one time that happened.

It was on a Saturday, and I was to preach on Sunday. And I love to go out in the country and find a place just to be alone with God all Saturday. That was my favorite day of the week.

And this particular day was extremely hot. And I couldn't find any cool place. So I was walking along this road, and there was a large culvert, like a pipe.

You know, it goes under the road. And I walked in that, and it was, oh, this is a cool place to sit. So I sat, and I began to read and study and pray.

And suddenly, without ever thinking of this man, the Holy Spirit said, Go see Kyle Bell. Kyle Bell. I haven't seen Kyle Bell in maybe over a year.

I knew where he lived. He only lived probably 15 miles from where I was. I said, Yes.

I started praying for Kyle. I knew he was lost. I'd shared the gospel with him before.

And I started praying for him. I thought, Okay, I'll go Monday or maybe Sunday night, I'll go see him. And as I go back to study, this incredible compelling from the Holy Spirit to go.

Now, I will guide you with my eye. Well, an unbroken man, like I have been many times in the past, said, I won't go now. I've got to prepare a message.

But through brokenness, yes, Lord. I don't understand why, but yes, Lord. So I go.

And I drive to his house, and he lives right next to a bar. And it was in the middle of the afternoon. I thought, There's no way he would be here on a Saturday afternoon, because Saturdays, knowing what he did.

But obey the Lord. I knock on the door. No one answers.

I knock on the door again. No one answers. I walk back to my car and get in the car.

And this strong, compelling from the Lord, Don't stop. I get out of the car, walk back to the door, and knock. And the door opens.

And this man, you look at his countenance, was in absolute despair. He said, Come in. I just told him the truth about what had happened.

He had a loaded pistol next to his chair. Next to his chair, ready to check out. We must tune our ear to the Lord and be willing.

I didn't tell you that to tell you about me. I tell you that to tell you about our God, who has moved with compassion and wants to use his people. He wants to use each and every one of us.

But we must obey the Spirit. When the Holy Spirit prompts you, you must obey Him. You must do what He tells you to do.

That's a picture of brokenness. It's not just falling on the ground and saying, Oh, I'm a vile worm. Brokenness is allowing God to flood your heart and soul with His compassion.

And you're His child now. And Him saying, Go when you go. Surrender when you surrender.

Will you allow God to break your heart for people? Will you stop looking at people as a project or something you can get out of them? And rather look at them as someone for whom Christ died. May God touch our hearts. Will you answer the call as we go from this place? Will you answer the call to become a fisher of men, to feed the hungry? This is a wonderful place for hungry souls to come and be fed.

You must be willing. And it's not just the elders. It's not just the elders.

It's the body of Christ. Are you willing? Are you willing? You know, it can be a young mother. Who's just ministering to her children, but also to another child.

God will show you what it is. Let's pray together. Heavenly Father.

I pray, Lord God, that we would truly hear your words. And Lord, I pray that as you are speaking to us today. If there's someone here that is not yet fully surrendered.

Not yet really cast themselves into your open hands. To be blessed and broken. That this very day, Lord.

You would draw them. You would compel them. To the point of surrender.

Final, absolute surrender and obedience. And Lord, I ask for all of us. Myself included, Lord.

That you would break my heart. For the things that break your heart, Lord. That you would give me tears again.

For the loss, Lord. Sometimes my heart grows so cold and my eyes so dry. Lord, would you do something in me.

Would you do something in us who are not there. Whose hearts are hardened. Who are more prone to criticize than we are to have compassion.

Who are more prone to condemn someone than we are to show love and mercy. And grace and forgiveness. Lord, do a deep work in our hearts.

That we may go from this place today. As fishers of men. Ambassadors of Christ.

Truly representing our compassionate Savior. Our holy God. The one who came to seek and to save that which was lost.

Give us your love. Give us your boldness and courage. We can't give away what we don't have.

Lord, some of us need to receive from you today. So that we can give it away. May you do that, Lord.

May you find the people who are ready today to be broken. To be inconvenienced and to receive from you. That we may give to others.

In Jesus' name. Lord, please bring one person across our path this week. Who needs you.

Amen. Amen.

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