

# The Form Or The Fire

by Brian Long

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**Scripture:** Acts 2:17, Hebrews 3:12, John 7:37, 1 Kings 18:36, Ephesians 5:8

**Topics:** "Seeking God's Glory", "Transformation through the Holy Spirit"

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## Description

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## Transcript

That will be present in the last days. Two different classes of people that will be present on the earth in the last days. And here's the here's the first one I want to point out.

Second, Timothy chapter three, beginning in verse one. This know also that in the last days, in the last days, perilous time shall come for men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. And watch this having a form.

Of godliness, but denying the power thereof from such turn away. Here is one class of people you don't want to be identified as. Who are they? They are those who have a form of godliness, an outward form looks like Christianity, looks like a religious churchgoer, looks right on the outside, but something is missing on the inside.

There is a form, but there's no fire. There's a form of godliness, but there's nothing real on the inside. There's no power of God.

Why? The Bible says because they are people who love themselves, they're covetous, everything that is opposite of Christ, a lover of self, covetous, boasters, proud. On it goes having lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. And because they've embraced all of this, they're like clouds without rain.

They're like a tree that's barren, looks like it should have fruit, but you get closer and there's no fruit there. This group of people will be on the earth in the last days. And brothers and sisters, that's a characteristic of the days in which we're living, is it not? Lovers of ourselves, always taking a look at me, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, disobedient to parents, covetous, boasters, proud, all of the rest, having a form.

But there's another group of people that will be on the earth in the last days. At the same time, they're not characterized by form. They're characterized by fire.

And I want you to see them in Acts chapter two, please. Acts chapter two, beginning in verse 17. And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God.

I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy and your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams. And on my servants and on my handmaidens, I will pour out in those days of my spirit and they shall prophesy and I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath blood and fire and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before that great and notable day of the Lord come.

And it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. Here's a here is a group of people who are not characterized by form at all because there's a fire of God that they've been baptized with. He's called the Holy Spirit.

There's a fire of God within them and they are prophesying. They are seeing visions. They're dreaming dreams.

They're prophesying, they're proclaiming the word of the Lord. Ordinary people, your servants and your handmaidens, young men, old men, your sons and your daughters, your children, prophesying, witnessing, evangelizing, proclaiming Christ. How? Because they're filled with the spirit of God, the fire of God.

Now, it begs the question, which camp am I in? Who will I be a part of? Who am I really? Is my life characterized by empty religious form? Or the fire of the Holy Spirit, the living God living inside of me, it's one or the other. Form is hypocrisy. Fire is reality.

Form is dead, powerless religion. Fire is a living, loving relationship with Jesus Christ. Form is outward conformity.

You have the talk. You say the right things. You sing the right songs.

Outward conformity. But fire is inner reality. Form is pretense.

Fire is power. One is form, one is fire. And I want you to see today that our God is a God who answers not with form.

There is nothing about dead religious form. That is birth of God, and yet there are a lot of churches that are characterized by form, a lot of a lot of Christians that walk around with form. But our God is a God who

answers with fire.

First Kings chapter 18, let's turn there and see how God answers with fire. A little bit of background in case you weren't here last night. First Kings chapter 18 is when Elijah issues this challenge to the prophets of Baal and the false prophets of Asherah and all the children of Israel.

He has everybody meet him up on Mount Carmel. So imagine this, you're up on top of Mount Carmel and here's one group of people, the 450 prophets of Baal. They are led by the devil himself.

They have given themselves over to the devil. They have a sort of power, but it's a demonic power. They are leading the people of God astray.

They have no fear of God. They have a tremendous influence in the land. They are there.

Then you have this huge group of people, the children of Israel, who are sort of wavering back and forth. We want to be called children of God. We want to belong to God.

But we sort of like to worship over here at this altar of Baal also, where there's all the things of the world, the dancing and all the sin and everything that goes along with it. So they're wavering back and forth. And Elijah says enough of this.

You're either for Christ or you're against him. You're for God or you're against him. There's no middle ground.

And so he issues this challenge on Mount Carmel beginning in verse 21. Elijah came unto all the people and said, how long halt ye between two opinions? How long are you going to waver back and forth? If the Lord be God, follow him. But if Baal, then follow him.

One or the other. You know, Jesus said basically the same thing in Revelation chapter three, when he said, I know your works that you're neither cold nor hot. Oh, how I wish that you were either cold or hot.

But because you are lukewarm and you're not cold or hot, I'm about to spew you out of my mouth. Those are strong words to the lukewarm from the Lord Jesus. Hear them.

Better for you to be cold than to be a pretender. Better to be cold than have some religious mask on and going through all kinds of form, but having no fire within. And the same spirit of God is speaking through the prophet Elijah and saying, if the Lord be God, follow him.

If Baal is your God, go follow him. But you can't do both. There's no place for both.

God will have no place for lukewarmness. That's a divided heart. And so the challenge continues in verse twenty two.

Then said Elijah unto the people, I even I only remain a prophet of the Lord, but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. Let them therefore give us two bullets and let them choose one bullet for themselves and cut it in pieces and lay it on wood and put no fire under. And I will dress the other bullet can lay it on wood and put no fire under and call you on the name of your gods.

And I will call on the name of the Lord and the God that answers by form. Fire, the God who answers by fire, let him be God. And of course, the prophets of Baal go first.

They prepare their altar, their sacrifice. They pray from morning until noon. No one answers.

So they change up their form. See, when the fire is missing, we rely on form. Maybe it's the formula.

Oh, I know we got to get on the altar and dance. That's what we have to do to work it up. So that's what they do at the end of verse twenty six.

They leaped up on the altar. It's all form. There's no fire.

There's no power. And Elijah mocked them in verse twenty seven came to pass at noon. That Elijah mocked him and said, cry aloud.

He's your God. Either he's talking or he's pursuing or he's in a journey or maybe he's asleep and you need to go wake him up. I must have angered them because they did know a power.

You see, it's not that the devil doesn't have power. The devil has power, but his power is no power compared to the power of our God. And I'll tell you, amen.

There's a reason that Satan didn't manifest his power. There were other times they would have danced on that altar and there would have been some display of witchcraft or power. You know why I didn't display his power? Because there's another presence on that mountain, the power of almighty God and the devil.

The demons know him. They know Jesus and they tremble. They dare not move.

Because almighty God is about to answer by fire. They know who he is and their mouths are shut. They are silenced in the powerful presence of the Lord.

He mocks them and they get upset. So then it says in verse 28, they cried aloud and cut themselves. After all their manner with knives and lancets till the blood gushed out upon them.

Maybe we need more performance to please our God. Maybe he'll answer and nothing happens. Can I say to you on a side note, brothers and sisters, we have a generation of young people who are cutting themselves.

They say because the pain is so deep on the inside, they cut on the outside. And you know who's behind it all? The voice of a lying devil who comes to kill, steal and destroy. But Jesus said to that young person, I've come to you might have life and that you might have it more abundantly.

All such cutting and self mutilation is from the devil. And you see it there. Nothing happened, nothing, no one answers.

And it says in verse 29, it came to pass when midday was passed and they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice that there was neither voice nor any to answer nor any that regarded. All form, no fire. Now it's Elijah's turn.

God wants to answer by fire, but first the way has to be prepared. There are conditions to being filled with the Holy Spirit. You receive the Holy Spirit when you come to faith in Christ.

He comes to live on the inside of you. But we need continual fillings. We leak.

We need fillings with the presence and power of God. But there are conditions. And I believe we see a beautiful type here and Elijah preparing the way in us, preparing the way to be filled, immersed, whatever you want to call it.

I don't care. It's filled, immersed, baptized with the Holy Spirit where he then has you. You don't just have him.

He has you. So here's a type. What's the first thing Elijah does? Verse 30, to prepare the way, Elijah said unto all the people, come near unto me.

And all the people came near unto him and he repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down. Now, we looked at that last night. This is where we cast down our idols because only Jesus is Lord of my life.

There's no room on this altar for any other God. There's no room on here for the ways of the world and all these other things that crowd out my relationship with God. Get rid of your idols and say Jesus is Lord.

Build up the altar. Go back to the quiet time. Go back to pure and simple devotion to Jesus.

The prayer closet, talking to him, loving him with a pure, undivided heart. Build the altar. That's what he did.

And then he says, he tells us how he built the altar. Elijah took 12 stones according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob unto whom the word of the Lord came, saying, Israel shall be thy name. And with the stones, he built an altar in the name of the Lord.

You know, there were 12 stones scattered. How many tribes of Israel? Twelve. He gathers them all together.

You know what else God is saying? I want to send my fire, but I'm not sending it on division. Bring my people together. Red, brown, yellow, black and white.

Bring them together as one husband and wife. Quit fighting. Love one another.

Come together. Bring, let there be reconciliation here. Come together in unity.

And it's there that God commands the blessing. The fire is going to fall on such unity. Build the altar.

Rebuild the altar. But then what happens? Verse 33 says he put the wood in order. That's the cross we saw last night.

Is there sin in your life right now? Unforgiven sin. You're separated from God because of your sin. Come to the cross of Jesus Christ.

Come where he died, where he shed his blood to wash away your sins and make you clean. You can be forgiven. You can be made whole.

You can be given a pure heart. And it all happens at the cross. Put the cross in order.

And also that cross is the cross we take up to follow him, denying ourselves. We talked about that last night. So I'm moving on.

The altar is built. The wood is put in order. That's the cross.

And then he cut the bullock in pieces and laid him on the wood and said, that's surrender, giving every part of ourselves to the Lord. But here's where we come to this morning. Fill four barrels with water and poured on the burnt sacrifice and on the wood.

And he said, do it the second time. And they did it the second time. And he said, do it the third time.

And they did it the third time. And the water ran round about the altar and he filled the trench also with water. And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice that Elijah, the prophet, came near and he said, Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel and that I am thy servant and that I have done all these things at thy word.

Hear me, O Lord, hear me that this people may know that thou art the Lord God and that thou has turned their heart back again. Verse 38, then the fire of the Lord fell. What was that like? Consumed the burnt sacrifice, consumed the wood, consumed the stones, consumed the dust, licked up the water that was in the trench, and when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces and they said, the Lord, he is God.

The Lord, he is God. You know why we so desperately need such a revelation of the glory of God today, such a demonstration of his power? Why do we need so desperately to be filled with the Holy Spirit? Because form can't do this. Nobody sees form and says, I want what you have.

Nobody sees form and falls on their face before God under conviction of sin. And cries out, Jesus is Lord, your God must be God, Jesus is Lord, nobody sees form and does that form can't do that. Only the power of God can do that.

Only the power of the Holy Spirit can do that. Only the fire of God. Listen to me, brothers and sisters.

There were two mass shootings yesterday within 24 hours. How much darker does it have to get in this nation? For us to awaken and realize we need God in America, we need God in this nation. Is there an answer for such people? Is there an answer for those parents that lost children yesterday? There is an answer and I guarantee you it ain't form.

What are you going to do if you were called to minister to such broken people? Put together a three point sermon, have a few cliches, Christian cliches, tell a few jokes, show a few movie clips from the latest Hollywood movie. No, that's form. It gives no hope.

It brings no life. And it's happening in churches all across this nation. Sunday after Sunday after Sunday, empty form with no power.

How are you going to minister to such broken people? There's only one way you can't give away what you don't have. The spirit of God has to be alive in you and I so that we have something to give them. God forbid that at a midnight hour, God brings someone across our path who needs him and we have nothing to set before them.

The only reason we have nothing to set before them is because we are dry inside. There's no fire. When the fire is burning and the river is flowing, we will have it's not us.

It's him who lives in us. You see how desperately we need fire. Does the church have an answer? For that broken apart marriage of the church, have an answer for that husband whose wife just left him.

That wife whose husband just left. Those little children whose hearts were splintered apart because of divorce, is there an answer for broken homes? Is an answer to prevent that? Is there an answer for that dad who walks in and finds his son with a heroin needle in his arm? We don't need four. They tried to form.

They tried the formulas. Only one answer, the power of the living God, the life giving power of the Holy Spirit. If the sun shall set you free, you shall be free indeed.

And only one way to overcome such sin and darkness. Only one way for a church to turn this world in this country upside down. And that is for her to be endued with power from on high.

And that's the power of the Holy Spirit. That's the fire of the living God. It's the fire we need.

Then the fire of the Lord fell. And the fire of the Lord is still falling, brothers and sisters, but not on bulls and goats. He's falling upon his church, his people, living sacrifices.

Listen to how John the Baptist said it would happen. John the Baptist said in Luke chapter three, verse 16, I baptize you with water unto repentance. But there is one mightier than I that's coming.

The straps of whose sandals I'm not even worthy to untie. When he comes, he will baptize you, immerse you. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

That's what he will do. That's what Jesus will do, baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. That's what happens when the fire of the Lord falls, people get filled with the Holy Spirit.

There's a revelation of the glory of God, a manifestation of the presence of God and a demonstration of the power of God. Now, the big question is, though, when did the fire fall? After he built the altar, after he put the cross, the wood in order, after that place of surrender, all the pieces of the bull are on the altar. And now one we haven't looked at yet after he immersed it with water.

Look at this, Elijah says, fill four barrels full of water and pour it on the offering. So they do. He says, do it a second time.

So they do it a second time. He says, do it a third time. So they do it a third time.

Elijah had this offering and this altar immersed in water, baptized in water. He poured it out not once, twice, 16 barrels of water on this altar. Here's what the Holy Spirit said to me.

He poured it on the altar as if it were thirsty. Jesus will not fill anybody with his spirit who is not thirsty. That is a prerequisite.

If you are already full of yourself and you're satisfied with yourself, don't expect to be filled with the Holy Spirit. He doesn't fill those who are already full of themselves. He doesn't fill those who are already full of the world.

He fills those who come to him empty and who come to him thirsty. He immersed that sacrifice as if it were thirsty. Thirsty, blessed Matthew five or six, blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.

Doesn't say blessed or are you blessed as anybody, they'll be filled. Blessed are those who thirst, who hunger for God. When I was a young man.

I was desperately wanting to be holy, I was I knew who I was and I was not a good person at all. And I wanted to be right with God, I wanted to be holy, I didn't know how. And with my Catholic background, I kept thinking penance, more and more penance.

So one day I saddled my horse and I was determined I was going to ride as far away in the mountains I could go, get alone and on purpose take no food and no water. Maybe if I fasted long enough and suffered long enough. Then I would be I would become holy.

And I settled my horse and I took off and I rode for miles, hours and miles as far away as I could get. And it was in the summertime and it was hot and it didn't take long for me to get really thirsty, really thirsty. And hour after hour after hour, evening went by and I'm going without water.

I don't know how it was a long time. I don't remember how long. Finally, I ride up on top of this mesa and there's a pond of water.

But it's stagnant and it stinks. Black, muddy water. And I was so thirsty, I thought, should I? No, I'd get sick.

So back on my horse, I got riding for miles. By this time, my tongue is sticking to the roof of my mouth, my throat is parched. All I can think about is water, cold, clear, clean water.

But where is it? Where will I find it? I remembered there's a spring, but this was miles and miles from where I was. There is a spring. And so I headed for that spring.

And all I could think about when a man is thirsty, the only thing that can satisfy him is what he is thirsting for. And all you can think about what occupies your mind, your very soul is water. And I rode and I rode and I rode.

And finally, I see the spring off in the distance, cold water gushing out of a rock hillside. And I ran up there and I dove into it and I put my head under it and I drank and I drank maybe not 16 barrels, but almost just drinking. I was thirsty.

I was thirsty. And that cold mountain water satisfied my thirst. Do you know what Jesus says about the thirsty? John chapter seven.

John chapter seven. Let me ask you before I read it, do you realize how much you need the Holy Spirit? Do you realize how much you need God? Are you thirsty for God alone? Have you tried to drink out of all those stagnant ponds that the world has to offer you? And yes, sin gives you a pleasure for a season. But where does it always lead? You're thirstier than you ever were before.

And then you can't get enough of that filth and it never satisfies. Jesus calls out to all who are thirsty. And this is what he says.

John chapter seven, verse 37. In the last day, that great day of the feast. And by the way, that great day of the feast is when they were going through all their laws, religious motions, all the form.

And Jesus, standing at the end of the day, stands up and cries, saying, If any man thirst, if any of you are thirsty, you've tried all the form. If you're thirsty, let him come to me and drink. He that believes on me, as the scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

First, I want you to notice he didn't say, let anybody come to me and drink. He said, if anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. You've got to be thirsty.

If any man is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. And what would happen? You will be so full and satisfied that out of your innermost being will flow rivers, rivers of living water. You say, what are the rivers of living water? Next verse, verse thirty nine.

But this spake he of the spirit which they that believe on him should receive, for the Holy Ghost was not yet given because that Jesus was not yet glorified. What are these rivers of living water? The Holy Spirit of God, and he is infinite, there is no end to him, he is life, he is power, he is fire, he is water. He's God, he's all we need, he's all we need.

If you're thirsty, come and drink. If you're empty, if you're needy, that's a prerequisite. And for those who say, yes, I am thirsty, I need God.

I'm sick and tired of the hypocrisy in my life. I'm sick and tired of the defeat. I'm sick and tired of all the empty form without the power.

I want fire. I want to be filled with the Holy Spirit. And you say, I'm thirsty, then notice what Jesus says in verse thirty nine.

This spake he of the spirit which they that believe on him should receive something else that's required. You must believe faith is absolutely essential in the kingdom of God. Without faith, it's impossible to please God.

You must come to God and believe that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him, you must take him at his word. You can't come to Jesus and doubt whether or not he was telling the truth when he said, if you're thirsty, come to me and drink and I will fill you. Because without faith, it's according to your faith, be it unto you, without faith, you grieve the heart of God and you will never enter in to what he has for you without faith.

He that believes and receives, let me ask you a question, how are you saved in the first place? How were you born again? You first believed. On the Lord Jesus Christ, as for the forgiveness of your sins, and you received him as Lord and Savior by faith, you didn't earn it, you didn't deserve it, you didn't work your way to it. You believed him, you believed his promise, you believed him and you received him by faith.

And it's the same, brothers and sisters, when he says, I want to give you the promise, I want to fill my people up, anoint you and do you with power from on high. But you must believe and you must receive, because without faith, it's impossible to please God. Now, did Elijah have faith? Did he ever have faith? You don't pour 16 barrels of water on an offering that you're expecting a big fire, that you want to ignite.

And what's also amazing to me, it says about this offering, he said, fill four barrels with water and pour it on the burnt sacrifice. Now, it wasn't burnt yet. But you see the faith, Elijah was so sure that God had spoken to him and God did speak to him because he said in his prayer, let them know that I've done all these things at your word, God.

Everything Elijah did, he did at the word of the Lord. His faith was not presumption resting on thin air. His faith was resting upon the bedrock of the word of God.

God said he would answer by fire. God told me to prepare the way. I'm taking God at his word.

You can pour as much water on that as you want. The fire is coming and you're going to know when it comes. You don't have to wonder whether it's real or not.

When God manifest his presence, nobody had this, the prophets, the children of Israel, none of them had to say, wonder if this is just form. Wonder if we could do that. No, there's no mistake in when the spirit of God moves, there's no mistake when God does what only he can do.

But he did it when he found a man who believed him. Who trusted him, turned to Hebrews chapter three real quick. Did you know God can have a promise for you and you never receive it for one reason only? Unbelief, I want you to see this in Scripture, Hebrews chapter three, Hebrews chapter three and four.

But let's look at verse 12, first of all, in Hebrews chapter three, Hebrews chapter three, verse 12. Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief. In departing from the living God, why does he call it an evil heart of unbelief? You might think of an evil heart of murder or an evil heart of adultery.

God says an evil heart of unbelief. What is so evil about unbelief? What is so evil about unbelief is that when we doubt God, we are as much as calling God a liar. That's what's so evil about it.

How can we doubt and not believe the one who has never told a lie? And who is 100 percent faithful, 100 percent of the time. See to it that there's not in any of you this evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. Now, watch this.

Verse 19 says, so we see that they could not enter in to the promised land, that is because of unbelief. Let us therefore fear lest a promise being left us of entering in to his rest. Any of you should seem to come short of it.

For unto us was the gospel preached as well as unto them. But the word preached did not profit them because it was not mixed with faith in them that heard it. This is what he's saying.

God's saying they had the same promise. I promised them the promised land. Why didn't they enter in? Because I had the promise.

That was my will. But my will and promise was never mixed with their faith, and therefore they never received. God can have a promise for you.

He wants to fill you with his spirit and endure you with power from on high. And do we ever need it in these days in which we live? But we never receive if we don't believe. If faith is not mixed with the promise, we never enter in.

Take heed to it, brothers. Believe when you pray, believe God and receive. Take him at his word.

Watchman Knee tells a story, a testimony that just has really impacted me in my life, especially when it comes to praying in faith. Watchman Knee said there was a time when he took a small mission team to the South Coast, a South China coast. I think there was six or seven of them is all there was that went to this island.

And they went to this island to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. They were preaching to a group of islanders that were given over to idolatry. Everybody on that island worshiped this idol that they called Ta Wang.

Ta Wang was like a Buddha type statue sitting in a chair. And they were all persuaded that that he was God. Well, in this mission team, there was a 16 year old boy that they called Brother Wu.

Brother Wu was he was only a Christian for a little while, but he was full of the fire of God, filled with the Holy Spirit. They all spread out one day preaching the gospel. Brother Wu is preaching to a large crowd out on the street.

And in frustration, he says, why won't you people believe? And they shouted back, we do believe we believe in Ta Wang. He is our God. Why do you believe in that idol? This is why every year when we have a festival for Ta Wang, he gives us perfect weather on that day every year.

And it's happened for over 200 years. And Brother Wu, this 16 year old young man said, what day is it this year? They said the day has been set for January 11th, eight o'clock in the morning, the festival. Everybody gathers for the Ta Wang festival.

Brother Wu said, then I promise you on January the 11th this year, my God will send rain and storm. That's all they needed to hear. The crowd was in outburst.

We don't want to hear any more preaching. We'll take the challenge. If your God sends rain on January 11th, then we'll know that your God is God.

But in over 200 years, it's never happened. Ta Wang always gives us sunshine on the day of festival. Well, watch me when the word got back to him, he was a little bit upset.

He thought, is this presumption or is this faith? But before he rebuked him, he went to prayer. And he said, oh, Lord. Oh, and then the word spread throughout the island.

Let's see whose God is God. We know Ta Wang is our God. And watch me when he said, oh, Lord, did we cross the line? Was this young brother just being too presumptuous? Should we all just leave right now? About that time, the spirit of God brought a thought to his mind.

Where is the God of Elijah? Where is the God of Elijah? He knew he had his answer. He got up and he gathered the mission team around. He said, God will send rain on January 11th.

He's the God of Elijah. And when Elijah prayed that it would not rain, it did not rain for three years. When he prayed that it would rain, it rained.

Our God is the God of heaven and earth. He's the maker of the rain. And so, of course, there's all this anticipation leading up to the January 11th.

The morning of January 11th, Watchman Nee is awakened by the sunshine beaming through his window. Seven o'clock in the morning. He opened his eyes as if this isn't good.

Walked over to the window, looked out the window and there was not a cloud. He couldn't find a cloud in the sky, blue skies. He went to the breakfast table and they were already sitting around the breakfast table.

Everybody was silent. He said, let's pray. And when he went to pray, he said, Lord, it doesn't look like rain outside.

And all of a sudden he was interrupted in his prayer with the same thought. Where is the God of Elijah? Where is the God of Elijah? God, we believe you want to reveal your glory to these people. For the sake of their souls, the glory of your name, send rain.

And they begin to eat their rice. As they're eating their breakfast, they hear drip, drip on the roof, true story. They hear a few raindrops, they begin to rejoice, but nobody looks outside.

They just keep eating. And then they hear this downpour. It's as if the heavens opened and they begin to praise God.

They finish, he said, let's give thanks. And they gave thanks and they prayed, Lord, send even more rain. So pretty soon they look outside and the water is running down the street.

They look outside their hut and the water had risen to the third step of their hut. They're all watching outside and here comes this group of youth down the street shouting, there is no tar weighing, there is no tar weighing. He had to stay in today because of the rain.

The Lord is God. This angered the elders of that island, angered them. So they said, oh, we need to bring him outside and he'll stop the rain.

So they picked this idol up on chairs for men. They carry him outside. You know what sin does? Sin makes you stupid.

It does. Sin makes you stupid. All sin.

They carry the idol out there and they put him in the middle of the street waiting for tar weighing to stop the rain. When all of a sudden there were heavier sheets of rain. So then they panic.

They pick him up and two of the guys stumble and they fall and tar weighing falls over and fractures his jaw and breaks off his left arm. They pick him up, bring him in under the hut and the island, many of them are shouting, there is no tar weighing. Then they go out the next day, clear skies preaching the gospel.

Do you think there were different results? Why? Because the fire. Well, in this case, the rain fell. Our God is a God who answers by fire.

Our God is a God who answers by rain. Our God is a God who answers when it comes to revealing his glory, manifesting his presence and demonstrating his power. And he's willing to do it for those who believe.

Are you thirsty? Come to him thirsty. Will you do you believe his word? Is it true? Yes. Is he faithful? Yes.

So what what else is left? All we have to do is ask now and notice what Elijah did. He prayed. How are we on time, Brother Shane, what but when do you usually? OK, I got a few minutes here.

What First Kings chapter 18. Notice one last thing, his prayer, the last thing he does before the fire falls. Verse thirty six, and it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice that Elijah, the prophet, came near and said, Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and of Israel, let it be known this day that there

are God in Israel and that I'm thy servant and I have done all these things at thy word.

Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God. This prayer was so short, as Pastor said earlier, most of the prayers in the Bible weren't long, but how effective, how powerful. Why was this prayer so powerful and effective? Number one, it's prayed in faith.

But there's two things about this prayer itself. I want you to notice that God always answers. Number one, it was saturated with a passion for the glory of God.

It was focused on the glory of God. Do you see that, Lord God, let it be known that you are God for your for the sake of your name, for your own testimony in this nation. God, let it be known that you are God.

God is looking for a people who have an all consuming passion for his glory. A people who have been to the cross and died to their own glory, they don't want glory for man, they don't want fame, they don't want honor and recognition, they only want one to be honored and one to be glorified, and that is Jesus. That's what he's looking for.

If he can find the people that really have that motive, that passion for his glory and that pray accordingly, watch what God will do. So it was a prayer that was saturated with the glory of God, let it be known that you are God. This is what we often ask myself, and when you go to prayer or you're facing something, ask this question, God, what would bring you the most glory? What would bring you the most glory? And it makes it easy to make decisions.

And to know how to pray. That should be our number one request and desire. What will bring you the most glory? But the second thing it had to do with were the souls of people.

You can't love God unless you love what he loves. And who does he love more than anything else of all his creation? More than the rocks, trees, oceans, fish, everything, he loves people. He created man in his own image and notice the passion in his prayer, not only Lord, let it be known that you're God, but watch this in verse 37, that this people may know that they are the Lord God and that you have turned their heart back again.

God is looking for a church of people who are consumed with this, the glory of God, the souls of men, if you'll share that burden with the Lord and allow him to plant that within you, it will transform your prayer life and you will begin to see God fill you to overflowing with his spirit. Why would he fill a people with his spirit who are going to sit and soak and live for themselves? He won't do it. But if people say, Lord, I want to be used for your glory, I want to be poured out.

He's not waiting for capable people, none of us are capable, I'm sure not. Or are qualified according to the world, but somebody that will just say, Lord, it's not much for sure, but what I have, I give to you, would you use me? Would you use me for your glory, would you do something that can only be explained by you and therefore only you can receive the glory? And the Lord will always say, go maybe across the street, maybe across the aisle. Maybe across the counter in your home.

But you are called to live for others, others, Lord, yes, others, let this my motto be, for when I have lived for others, then I will have lived like the. It's all about others, the souls of men that should characterize our prayer. I'm going to leave you with one more testimony because I think that it will stir your faith.

And compel you to pray in faith, and then next service, we'll talk more, Lord, willing about being filled with the Holy Spirit toward the end of that, but. I wanted to share this with you, I was pastoring a church in the Oklahoma Panhandle. And this had become a passion for God to do something that only he could do.

And we had been praying like that as a church. And one day, one morning, I came to the office and my secretary was my sister-in-law at the time. And I said to her, I said, Stormy, I want to go next door to where the church was, go down in the basement and pray.

I really feel a need to pray and I'm going to pray and I might be there, you know, for a few hours. No interruptions unless it's an emergency. She said, OK.

I went downstairs and started praying and the same thing. God, reveal yourself to this, shake this down, you know, let it be known that you're God. Do what only you can do.

And then you pray for the souls of people. Well, I hadn't been praying 15 minutes, maybe I'd planned to be down there a long time, maybe 20 minutes. And the spirit of the Lord said to me, compelled me, go get up, get up.

I got up, walked upstairs, and as I literally, as I walked out the door, there's a woman that had just pulled up in the parking lot, getting out of the car and we met. Now, this woman was walking like this. She looked like absolute darkness.

Death. And she had this big crystal on her neck. She's walking up and I said, ma'am, are you OK? I knew she wasn't OK.

No, I need help. Come in, brought her in my office. What I didn't know, this woman, you'll find later, was a practicing witch in the town.

None of us knew that. Maybe three miles from the church. She was involved in the occult, doing outright witchcraft.

She had attempted suicide about a year previous to this. She was going to do it this time. She had a gun.

She had a loaded gun. She was on her bed and she was going to commit suicide. And one last time, she says, if there's anyone that can help me, please help me.

And she has suddenly had this thought because there was this phone book on the table next to her bed before she pulled the trigger to open the phone book. She literally she didn't look. She opened it one time, she told me, and it was the yellow pages.

And she saw a church and she saw the phone number and she called the phone number. My secretary, in the meantime, was on the phone with her, listened to her, said, come immediately. She knew where the church was just down the road.

And so as she and then my secretary was praying, I didn't know she was praying. This woman's name was Jimmy McDaniels. Jimmy gets out of the car and we meet.

We're going to my office. She begins to I begin to talk to her. We were in there for quite a while talking and I begin to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with her.

The Holy Spirit came, convicted her strongly of sin. She cried out and I, you know, encourage her cry out to Jesus. She cried out to Jesus, was gloriously saved right there in the office, right there in the office.

I begin to pray. We both begin to just rejoice and praise God. But then the Lord said to me, there must be repentance, full repentance.

And I said, Jimmy, I want to you've told me a little bit about what you're involved in. I had no idea to what depth. And I said, I want to read something to you in scripture.

And I went to Acts and I read to her about in Ephesus when they were coming to Christ, Paul had them bring out all their witchcraft, paraphernalia, all these abominations before God. And they had a huge fire. And I said, are you really willing to totally repent, get rid of anything that you have that is an abomination to God? She said, I'm willing.

I said, what is in your house? And she said, oh, you have no idea. I said, if I call another sister from the church, I had a prayer warrior, Lena Alexander, who was in her late 70s. I said, if I call another sister from the church, can we go to your house right now and clean out that house and you repent? Turn to the Lord wholeheartedly.

She said, yes. I said, well, let's start by taking that thing off your neck. And she took it off, threw it in the trash.

So we went to her house. We walked into this. It was a trailer house.

We walk in the house. All the windows are covered in black plastic. There is a presence of absolute evil, demonic evil.

There's a wooden altar in the front room with knives, candles. I said, don't even tell me. I said, start loading the truck.

And we had black trash bags. We took that altar out. We went through and we filled up three or four big black trash bags, books, music, all kinds of paraphernalia, knives, swords, all kinds of stuff.

And then went through the house praying. It was amazing because we were being so led by the spirit. We were going to each room.

Lord, show us if there's anything here that is an abomination to you. And until we had a piece of that room was clean, we wouldn't leave. After that, we'd go to another room.

I was walking around one room and she said, I think this is done. I said, Jimmy, there's something still here. We kept praying.

There's something still here. She's looking around frantically. Finally, she looks down underneath this china cabinet, pulls out this.

It was a sword. And I don't know what she did with it. She said, it's this.

I said, get rid of it. And you could feel just this Lord leading us and saying, done, done, done. Filled this black, this pickup, back of the pickup up with all this stuff, begin to pray to her house.

And I'll never forget this. She runs over to one of the windows and rips off the black plastic. And she's weeping, just crying and tears running down her face.

And she falls on her knees and she says, oh, Jesus, I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. I've hated the light.

I've hated the light all these years. Even the physical sunlight was like an example to her. She just basked in the light.

And we prayed over her, had a glorious time of prayer. We went out into the country, had a huge bonfire. And she just wept.

Jesus, I'm sorry. Jesus, thank you. That woman became one of the most glorious testimonies in all the town.

She hadn't had a job in a long, long time. She got a job immediately at the local grocery store. Almost every time that I would go into the grocery store, I would hear singing down the aisles, singing praises to Jesus out loud.

Everybody that went in there was going to get witnessed to. Everyone that went in there. This woman was full of the Spirit of the Lord.

Full of the joy of the Lord. You would hear her singing. You would hear her praising God.

She was a new creation. She was a practicing witch. You know what happens when we really take on this prayer of God? It's all about your glory and the souls of men.

In evangelism, we go out to them. In revival, He brings them to us even. None of us even knew she was in the town.

Small town. Country town. Never seen her before in my life.

And God plucked her out of darkness. What happens? We were praying and the wind started blowing. The fire started falling.

Conviction came. And God plucked her out of the darkness and brought her into the light. Now, was she truly born again, Brother Brian? I moved from there.

Hadn't talked to her in years. And I was where I am now in Bartlesville. My phone rang one night.

She said, do you know who this is? I knew immediately. Jimmy McDaniels. She said, but it's not McDaniels anymore, Brother Brian.

I got married. I said, praise God. She said, we moved to Denver, Colorado.

Let me tell you what we're doing. I said, tell me. She said, once a week, we take all the extra money that we set aside and we go to McDonald's.

Sorry, Shane. She hasn't been to the health seminar yet. So she goes to McDonald's.

She said, we buy all the Happy Meals that we can afford. And then we go down the street.

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