

When God Breathes On A Dying Flame

by Brian Long

This sermon emphasizes the importance of repentance, faith, and prayer in experiencing personal revival and restoration. It highlights the compassion and gentleness of the Lord Jesus towards the broken, weak, and wounded, encouraging individuals to seek God's transformation and empowerment through the Holy Spirit. The message underscores the significance of asking, seeking, and knocking in faith, believing that God can breathe life into dying flames and ignite a revival in hearts and communities.

Scripture: Isaiah 42:1, Matthew 11:28, Luke 11:9, Psalms 34:18, Jeremiah 18:6, Luke 15:11, Revelation 1:12, Isaiah 60:1, Mark 9:24, Romans 8:11

Topics: "Repentance", "Personal Revival"

Description

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Transcript

breathes on a dying flame, when God breathes on a dying flame. Isaiah chapter 42 beginning verse 1. Now this is a prophecy of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is written, you know, some 700 years probably before He was ever born in Bethlehem, but it's pointing to Him and this is what God the Father says about His Son.

Isaiah 42 beginning of verse 1. Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth. I have put my spirit upon Him. He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.

He shall not cry nor lift up nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. And here's the verse I want to underscore this morning. This is our text.

A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench. He shall bring forth judgment unto truth. A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench.

The ESV says, and a faintly burning wick He will not quench. That candle that's just almost gone, He will not snuff it out. Here's one more translation.

He will not crush the weakest reed or put out a flickering candle. He will bring justice to all have been wronged. That's good news, my brothers and sisters.

You know what that says about our Lord Jesus? There was a compassion, a gentleness about the Lord. The devil loves to kick you while you're down, push you down. The Lord's always lifting you up, picking you up.

And this gives such hope, this smoking flax, this flickering candle, this smoldering wick. There's still some life there, but not much. I mean, just a dying ember, it's a dying flame, just giving off smoke.

But what the Scripture is telling us here, what God is saying, that even then, when you feel like you're almost dead inside, you're dying. There's not much left. You can't give to others because you can't give away what you don't have.

And you're just giving off smoke. But there's a tiny bit of life there. God says there's hope.

I'm not going to snuff out even that. There's hope. Which says to me, personal revival is possible.

Personal restoration is possible. If God breathes on the dying flame, there will be life. This message the Lord's put on my heart is especially for the broken.

Especially for the brokenhearted, for the weak and the wounded, for the one who has failed. Maybe there's someone here you've absolutely, utterly failed. And you wonder, have I gone too far? Have I fallen one too many times? Is there really any hope for me? A smoking wick, he will not quench.

He will not suffer it to be put. A bruised reed that he can't, that cannot even lift up itself. He will not break, but he will do something even greater with it.

We'll see it here in scripture. I want to pray one more time. Father, I need your strength.

I need your grace. I need your heart to deliver this, Lord, exactly as you've given it to me. And as you're wanting to speak to these people, Lord, your precious people.

And even if there's someone here today who does not know you, that this very day you would awaken, awaken the heart, awaken our eyes to behold your glory. And Lord, you came to preach the good news to the poor. You came to heal the brokenhearted, and you came to set the captives free.

And I'm asking you to do that in Jesus' name this morning. Amen. Amen.

In Revelation chapter 1, you don't have to turn there, but in Revelation chapter 1, the apostle John has this incredible encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ. He sees the Lord Jesus in all of his glory. He says, I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a voice that sounded like a trumpet.

He said, when I turned around, I saw one dressed, one like the Son of Man. It was the Lord Jesus Christ. He was dressed in a robe that reached down to his feet.

John said, his eyes were like flames of fire. His head and his hairs were white like wool as white as snow. Speaking of the holiness and the glory of God.

His face shined brighter than a noontday sun. John said, when I saw him, I fell at his feet as a dead man. It took his breath away.

He saw the Lord in his glory. What an encounter. But there's something else he saw in that vision that's very intriguing and mysterious.

He said, when I saw him, he was standing in the midst of seven golden candlesticks. What are those seven golden candlesticks? At the end of Revelation chapter 1, Jesus tells us, he says, this is the mystery of the seven golden candlesticks. The seven golden candlesticks or lampstands are the seven churches.

Jesus, in all of his glory, standing in the midst of his people, his church. And what was it about that golden lampstand? What was the purpose of a lampstand? The purpose of a lampstand is to shine, amen? It's to give light. It's to push back the darkness, dispel the darkness.

That candle, that golden lampstand was shining. It was giving forth light. What is the purpose and calling of the church of Jesus Christ, you and I? It is to shine.

It is to give light. It is to push back the darkness. Your calling as a Christian is to shine, is to light up this world.

It's to bring the light of truth to those who are lost in darkness. It's to bring the love of God to those who are in despair. That's our calling, church.

We are called to shine. Listen to Isaiah chapter 60, verses 1 and 2. He says, Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people.

And boy, is that happening today. Gross darkness is covering the earth and the people. But the Lord shall arise upon you, and his glory shall be seen upon you.

That's your purpose. That's your calling for this lost world who has no hope to be able to look at the church of Jesus Christ and say, Their God must be God. There is light.

There is hope. There is truth. There is true love.

That's what they're to see. Jesus said it this way in Matthew chapter 5. He says, You are the salt of the earth. You are the light of the world.

A city that is set upon a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel. No, but on a candlestick, and it gives light unto all them that are in the house.

And then he says this, Let your light so shine that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father which is in heaven. But here is the penetrating truth I want you to see today, this morning. You cannot shine if you're not on fire.

The only way that lampstand shines is because it was burning. It was on fire. There was a flame.

And think about it this way. Each one of us, when you first put your faith in Jesus Christ and you were born again, you were saved, the Holy Spirit of God comes to live on the inside of you. There is a fire in your heart.

There's a burning in your heart. You are a candlestick. And he takes that candlestick, you, and he puts you on a lampstand with a lot of other candlesticks.

And he creates this lampstand, this light, this glory of God. That's his plan to reach the world. He's not preaching the gospel by sending angels from heaven.

He wants the world to know him through his people. But here's the tragedy. When we as the church of Jesus Christ, who are called to shine and called to burn with the love and glory of God are no longer doing so because that fire starts to die out.

Maybe it wasn't fed. Maybe it wasn't given fuel. Maybe the oxygen was cut off from it.

It's not being breathed upon. But for one reason or another, the flame begins to flicker and the fire begins to die and you end up like this smoking, smoldering wick, this dying flame. I want to ask you this morning, are you truly on fire for God? Or is the fire in your heart begin to flicker and die out? Do you truly have a burning heart for the Lord? Or has your love grown cold? Are you set ablaze for his glory? Or are you just putting off smoke? And there's nothing more irritating than someone that's just putting off smoke all the time.

Matter of fact, God talks about in Isaiah about the self-righteous who say, don't come near me, I'm holier than thou. He said, those people are like smoke in my nose. Irritating, self-righteous, arrogant, proud Pharisees.

Nothing worse than just putting off smoke. Has the fire died down? Is the flame flickering? Is there a smoldering wick? Or are you on fire? And if you had to be honest this morning and say, actually, there's not the fire that there once was. The flame is beginning to die.

Maybe for some of us, Brian, I don't even know if there's much smoke left. I want you to hear the good news of the gospel this morning. There is hope.

There is no such thing as hopelessness with Jesus. No such thing as hopelessness with him. There is hope.

He came to bring hope to the hopeless. As long as there's an ember, you know what he wants to do with you? Pick you up and breathe on you the breath of life, the spirit of the living God igniting that fire again. And he's able and he's willing to do it this morning.

Revival is possible. Restoration is possible with God. In fact, when God even breathes on a valley of dry bones, they come alive.

They come bone to bone. Flesh comes on them. They raise up a great and mighty army.

When everything looks hopeless and all looks like it's too late. Was it too late for Lazarus? Four days he was dead in the grave, already stinking. It's not too late for God.

Our God is a God of the impossible. Nothing is impossible with him. But it begins with you and me.

If this flame has begun to flicker and to die, first I want to identify who is that? Who is that smoking flax, that bruised reed? First of all, it's the weak and the weary. It's that one here in the message right now who feels so tired, so weak, so weary, like a bruised reed. What is so weak as a bruised reed? If even a little bird landed on it, it could just break in half.

What's so weak as a smoking wick? You could just easily pinch it and it's dead. So weak, so vulnerable, so weary. And it's because you're in the same trial over and over and over again.

Same old disappointment. Same old deep dark discouragement. Same old painful regret.

And you say, I'm tired of it all. I'm sick and tired of it all. Some of us become weak and weary because we have been trying to do in our own strength what can only be done in the power of the Holy Spirit.

You can be in ministry, and you're serving and you're going and you're doing all this, but you're not being filled up. You're not trusting and depending upon Him. And if you try to do in your own strength what can only be done by the power of God, you will burn out.

You will grow weak and you will grow weary. But hear the word of our Lord Jesus Christ to the weak and the weary. Matthew 11, verse 28.

Come unto me, He says. Come unto me first. Not to the counselor.

Not even to the pastor first. Not to anybody else. Not to Google to see what it's all about.

Come to me first, Jesus said. Come unto me, all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

And if you will come to Him in faith today, this is what He does. Picks you up. Breathe the breath of life.

I'm going to keep saying it. Breathe the breath of life. Breathe the Holy Spirit upon the flame, so that it will ignite again and burn and shine as you're called to.

So it's the weak and the weary. Also, He will do it not only for the weak and the weary, but also the wounded. That smoking flax.

That bruised reed is the wounded one. It's the one who has been battered by the strong stormy winds of adversity. And not just one gust of wind, but another and then another and then another.

It's like a fighter who's been knocked down. Punch, blow after blow. Punch, he keeps getting knocked down over and over again.

The stormy wind blowing out that candle and ignites just a little bit back. Blows on it again. Trial after trial after tribulation.

Heartache. It can come through betrayal. The one who has been betrayed by the one you love the most.

Betrayal in marriage. Betrayal by a good friend. Betrayal by another person in the church.

How that hurts. David said, it would have been one thing if it was my enemy, but it was my own brother. We went to the house of God together.

And he betrayed you. Parents who have had to bury a child. What can be more painful and cause a deeper wound than that? A spouse who has to bury, you know, their husband or their wife.

What can cause a deeper pain than that? For others, it's a wayward child. And your heart is breaking because right now we're here together, but your son or your prodigal son or daughter is out there in the world in sin. In captivity, in the grip of the devil, in the grip of sin.

And your heart is breaking. That's the wounded. What does God do with the wounded and the broken hearted? Listen to the word of God.

Psalms 34 verse 18. The Lord is near to the broken hearted and He saves those who are crushed in spirit. Isaiah 38 verse 5. He says, speaking to Hezekiah, but it applies to us.

God says, I've heard your prayer. I have seen your tears. He takes note not only of when a hair falls from our head, but every tear that falls from our eyes.

That's the compassion of our God. Psalm 147 verse 3. He heals the broken hearted and binds up their wounds. And Jesus said in Luke 4 18.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to heal the broken hearted and to set the captives free. That's what our God does.

What a Savior. What a mighty Savior. God will gently take up the broken hearted smoking flax and cover you with His mighty hand and breathe the breath of His Spirit into your life again.

But what about another person where the wounds and the weariness is self-inflicted? It's not because of what someone else did to you, but because of your own sin failure, your own willful sin, and no one else is to blame but you. You say, I'm reaping what I've sown. I've sinned willfully against God.

You're the wayward. You're the one that has drifted away from God, the wanderer. You've sinned willfully against God.

You've wasted precious time and so much of the precious life that God has given you. Is there any hope for you? Because there's nothing that will kill the fire in your heart like sin. Nothing will kill that flame like sin.

The Bible says in 1 Thessalonians, quench not the Spirit. That means don't put out the Spirit's fire. And if there's one thing that's sure to do that, it's willful, continual sin.

The Scripture says grieve not the Holy Spirit. If there's one thing that does that, it is sin. Sin grieves the Spirit of God.

It puts out the fire of God in your heart. You cannot flirt with it. You cannot play around with it.

And God hates it. You know how much God hates sin? First of all, He hates it because it's against His nature. He is a holy God.

But I think another reason He hates sin so much is because of what it does to His children. Think if your child, God forbid, but think if your child had some deadly disease like cancer. How do you look at that cancer? You hate it.

You hate the thing that's killing your children. God hates sin. And that's why the Holy Spirit can be living in you as a believer.

But if you continue to choose to sin against Him and to grieve Him, you're putting out the fire. He can't tolerate it. He will not tolerate it.

And the fire of God will die in your heart. You become a smoking ember. But suppose you're one that has said, that's me, that's where I am.

That's what's happened. Is there any hope? Praise God, there's hope. It's what the gospel is all about.

The Lord Jesus Christ died on that cross and shed His precious blood. It cost Him everything. But look at what He did.

He shed His precious blood so that you could be forgiven. You say, how many times? The Bible says where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. You know how I know God is not finished with you? Because you're here this morning.

You wouldn't be hearing this message this morning if God was finished with you. If there was no hope for you. No matter how far gone that you are, how far you've gone.

The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses us from all sin. And where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. And I'm not minimizing your sin.

Sin is horrendous. That's why I said God hated it. He hates it.

But there's something greater than your sin. And it's the amazing grace of God. The amazing grace of God.

Hallelujah. Turn to Jeremiah chapter 18. Because I want you to see this morning that failure does not have to be final.

Your failure does not have to be final. There is hope. Jeremiah chapter 18, beginning in verse 1. The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord saying, Arise and go down to the potter's house.

And there I will cause you to hear my words. Then I went down to the potter's house. And behold, he was wrought of work on the wheels.

And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter. That means it was ruined. Now look up here before we go any further.

Go down to the potter's house, Jeremiah. There I'm going to give you my message. This is God speaking.

He sees the potter molding the clay. And all of a sudden something happens. The clay falls apart in his hands.

It's marred. It's ruined. Now what would many say today? It's useless.

That it's ruined. God had a plan for me, but I've messed it all up. God did have a future for me.

He did have a call on me. It's all messed up. How do you fix it now? You're marred in the hand of the potter.

What does God do with the marred clay? Does he throw the clay away? Does he say, I'm sick and tired of this smoking flax. I'll look for somebody else. Enough with waiting on this bruised reed to ever come.

Smash it. I'll look for another one. No.

The clay was marred in the hand of the potter. So he made it again. He made it again.

Another vessel as seemed good to the potter to make it. The marred can be made again. Your failure does not have to be final.

Why? Because our God is master at that. He's master at taking people who is totally messed up, broken in despair. Those of us that have ruined.

Yes, there's consequences to our sin. But God is always on your side against the devil. The devil wants to tell you it's over.

The Bible says a righteous man, though he falls seven times, he gets up. Rejoice not against me, O my enemy. For will I have fallen, I will arise, the scripture says.

And God says, get up. No matter how many times you fall and get up, the clay can be remade. The marred can be made again.

But it does require something on your part. It does require something on your part. Verse 5, Then the word of the Lord came to me saying, O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter, saith the Lord? Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel.

At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, hear this, America, and concerning a kingdom to pluck up and to pull down and to destroy it, if that nation against whom I have pronounced, and he's pronouncing judgment, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. I will remake the clay. When? When they turn back to me.

When they repent. When they make a decision to get up and come back. So here's the first thing.

You can be made again. The flame can burn in your heart again, but it requires something of you called repentance. You hear it preached here.

You don't hear it preached a lot of places. Repentance. What is it? You have to get up and turn back to Jesus.

Come back home to God. And I think one of the most glorious pictures of repentance that the Lord gave us in all the scriptures is found in Luke chapter 15. Luke chapter 15 is a parable.

There's three parables, but the one I want to tell you about is the parable of the prodigal son. A certain man had two sons. The younger said to his father, Father, give me my share of the inheritance.

The father gave the younger son his inheritance. And the Bible says he went to a faraway land and he wasted it on wild living. And when he got to the bottom, when he ran out of money, he ran out of friends, he's at the very bottom.

Verse 14 of Luke 15 says, When he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land. And he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country and he sent him into his fields to

feed swine.

That was the lowest job that a Jew could ever have. Feeding pigs. It's the only one he could find.

And verse 16 says, He would fain have filled his belly with the husk that the swine did eat. He was so empty and hungry, now he's even craving the hog slop just for something to eat. And he began to be in want.

And verse 17, it says, No man gave him anything. Verse 17, this is where repentance starts. It says, And when he came to himself, and that's where you have to come.

He came to his senses. He finally woke up. It's when the Holy Spirit suddenly awakens you and you say, What am I doing here? Again? A bottle in my hand? Again? Pornography in the screen? Again? Falling again? What am I doing here? And the Spirit of God would say that.

What are you doing here, Elijah? You don't belong here. This doesn't fit who you are. This is not who you are.

You must come to your senses. Come to yourself. And then what has to happen? He said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread and enough to spare? And I will perish with hunger.

I will arise. I will get up and go to my father and will say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee. I'm no more worthy to be called thy son.

Make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose and came to his father. He made a decision and he turned around.

That's repentance. He made a decision and he turned around. You get up and you go back to the father that you have grieved.

The father that you have offended. The God who loves you, but that you've sinned against. You get up and you go back to him.

You turn around and return. And what will you find? Verse 20. But when he was a great way off, his father saw him, had compassion on him, ran, fell on his neck.

That is, he hugged him and he kept kissing him. You know what you will find, folks? When you finally make that decision to repent, to get up and turn away from your sin and to come back home, you'll find that God the father has been waiting and he's been watching all along. And when he sees you coming home, he doesn't wait with a horse whip, with a baseball bat.

He comes running, running to his son, embracing him, rejoicing. That is amazing grace. That is amazing grace.

Now, you will find something in the Scriptures if somebody despises that grace and somebody rejects that. The father's waiting. He'll only wait, so he'll wait, but he'll wait so long.

And if you reject that grace, you reject that call, then the only thing left for you is judgment. There is something in the Scriptures that you find makes God very angry and it's despising his grace. When he has poured out grace and mercy over and over again and you despise it, the Bible says in Romans, you're

storing up for yourself wrath unto the day of wrath.

Don't make light of the day of grace, amazing grace. When the Lord opens your eyes to see that he's waiting for you to come home and he's going to run to you, you better take advantage of it. You better get up and you better come running home.

That's repentance. That's repentance. And when you do, you will find again that he will blow the breath of his spirit upon you and you will live again.

That flame will ignite. But now back to Jeremiah. There's something else that's required.

Repentance. And then notice what else the Lord says here. Verse six.

Can I not do with you as this potter saith the Lord? Behold, as clay is in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel. God's asking that question. Can I not do with you as the potter does? And your response will reveal whether you believe him or doubt him.

And there's something absolutely vital in the kingdom of God. Essential to you ever being made restored. And it's called faith.

Without faith, it's impossible to please God. Without faith, you will never be restored. Can I not do with you as this potter does? The clay.

Now here's what's absolutely incredible to me. God just told them what he could do. God just told them what he would do if they would repent.

And notice their response. After he says return, verse 11, he says, Now therefore, go to, speak to the men of Judah and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the Lord. Behold, I frame evil against you and devise a device against you.

Return now, everyone from his evil way, and make your ways and doings good. God's saying, Come back. Come home.

Notice their response. Verse 12. They said, There is no hope.

But we will walk after our own doings, and we will, every one, do the imagination of his evil heart. And therefore, thus saith the Lord. Ask ye now among the heathen who has heard such things.

The virgin of Israel has done a very horrible thing. God says, Come home. I will breathe on that flame, that dying ember, and you will come alive again.

And they say, There's no hope. It's no use. We'll continue down our own path and do our own thing.

Folks, if you do not have faith, and you doubt God, and you don't respond to his day of grace, his invitation to you, it is a serious, fearful thing to fall into the hands of a living God. And even God says here, Who has even ever heard such a thing? So the question is, Do you believe? Do you believe? Do you know the Scripture says in Matthew chapter 13, verse 58, that Jesus did not many mighty works there because of unbelief? There were places that Jesus didn't do many mighty miracles and works for this reason only. They didn't believe him.

It wasn't that it wasn't his will. It wasn't that they didn't have a promise that he would do something. But they didn't believe him.

He could not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief. How tragic it would be to have that written across your life. I wanted to do great things with you.

I had a glorious purpose and plan for you. But I could not do many mighty things with you because of your unbelief. You wouldn't trust me.

You wouldn't believe me. Two blind men came to Jesus. Jesus said, What do you want me to do for you? They said, Lord, we want to see.

Jesus says, Do you believe that I'm able to do this for you? Yes, Lord, we believe. And Jesus said, According to your faith, be it unto you. And their eyes were opened.

God requires faith. He requires that we believe him. We take him at his word and we believe him.

So those who say, Yes, I'm willing to return. I'm willing to repent. I'm willing to believe.

There's only one thing left. You must ask. Ask him.

Ask him to heal the broken heart. Ask him to give you strength. Ask him to revive this dying flame.

And you know what you're asking essentially? God, please cleanse me and fill me with your Holy Spirit. Fill me with the Holy Spirit of God. Ask.

You've got to turn here with me. Luke chapter 11. We'll come to a close here in a minute.

Luke chapter 11. But you've got to see this. Luke chapter 11.

It's essential that we pray, that we ask. In verse one of Luke chapter 11, the disciples asked the Lord. They say, Lord, teach us to pray as John also taught his disciples to pray.

So the Lord gives them this model prayer. And then he gives a little parable here. He says in verse five, Which of you shall have a friend and shall go unto him at midnight and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves.

For a friend of mine is in his journey, has come to me, and I have nothing to set before him. Now think about this. How many of us as Christians have had someone brought across our path who were in desperate need? It was a midnight hour.

And you think, oh, let me call Pastor Shane. Let me call Morgan. God brought them to you first.

And why do you get anxious? You have nothing to set before them. It's a midnight hour. You cannot give away what you don't have.

What a tragic thing it is for a Christian to have somebody brought to them in need and have nothing to set before them. David Wilkerson said after the towers went down at 9-11, the Twin Towers, the terrorist attack, people flooded churches all over New York, all over the country. They said churches were full.

We experienced a little bit of it even in Oklahoma. But people ran to the church and they found that after a few weeks, there were fewer people in the church than even before 9-11. Those same people all departed.

When asked why, they said there was nothing there. They had no nothing there, no power coming from the pulpit, no life, no good news. You know, when times get really bad, as we saw this morning, you'll see the difference really, you'll easily see the difference between what's form and what's fire.

What's life and what's death. How tragic. They come at a midnight hour, hungry for bread, answers.

And we have nothing to set before them. There's one reason we have nothing to set before them. We're not filled with the Holy Spirit.

When you're filled with the Holy Spirit, rivers of life, rivers of living water come forth and the thirsty drink and the hungry eat. We need to be filled with the Holy Ghost. And you'll see this, I have nothing to set before Him.

Verse 7, And He from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not, the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, though He will not rise and give Him because He is His friend, yet because of His importunity, His recklessness, His persistence, His perseverance, He will rise and give Him as many as He needed.

Now, Jesus is teaching us something here. He's teaching us to persevere, to press in, to pray. Verse 9, And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you.

Ask for what? Seek, and you shall find. Seek for what? Knock, and it shall be open to you. What will be open to me? For everyone that asks receives.

He that seeks finds. To him that knocks, it shall be given. What will I receive? What will I find? What will be open if I'm asking, seeking, finding? Let's skip down to verse 13.

If you being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him? I thought I already had the Holy Spirit. I do if I'm a believer. But there's a difference between having the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit having you.

There's a difference between Him being resident and Him being president. There's a difference between just having the Spirit of God living in you as a believer and being filled and walking in the fullness. There's a difference, brothers and sisters.

So this asking, it's not that God has departed from me, but it's that the flame has died, is dying. And there's but an ember. So I'm asking you, Lord, to fill me afresh.

Breathe on me. Let the wind blow again. Let the river flow.

Let the fire burn. And how does it come? By asking, asking in faith. That's how it comes.

And in essence, He's still answering their request. Lord, teach us to pray. You know what Jesus is saying? You cannot pray like I pray without the Holy Spirit.

I'll teach you to pray. Ask for the Holy Spirit. Ask for the Spirit of God to fill you and empower you.

And He will transform your prayer life. Ask, seek, knock. What were the 120 doing in the upper room on the day of Pentecost before the fire fell and the wind blew and they were filled with the Holy Spirit? They were all in one accord, praying, asking, seeking, waiting upon God.

When you and I will give ourselves to prayer, no matter how you feel, however weak, however wounded, that's when you need to be in prayer the most. And give ourselves to prayer. No matter how many times I've failed, go to the cross of Jesus.

Look at the blood. Trust in the blood of Christ. Ask Him to forgive you and cleanse you.

And you give yourself to prayer. When we pray, the wind blows and the fire burns. I have had very few visions in my life, but last year I was on a plane headed to Britain and I was praying for revival for England.

And God gave me a vision that I will never forget. It was as vivid as if I'm looking at you. I suddenly saw this fire ignite in a field and it was spreading, burning brightly, rapidly.

I knew it was the fires of revival. I was so excited and ecstatic. I was rejoicing in my spirit on that plane, praying and rejoicing.

And then I saw next to it a room, a small room with believers on their knees crying out to God in prayer. And then I looked back at the flame, watching the fire, and suddenly the fire began to get weak as if a lantern or a candle, you put a glass jar over it. It was running out of oxygen and the flame was just like getting weak and started dying.

And I cried out in my spirit in prayer, Lord, don't let it die. Don't let it die. And I saw the room and nobody was praying.

Everybody quit praying. It was empty. The prayer meeting was empty.

And the Lord gave me a profound message, though it may be simple to you, but a profound message. When my people don't pray, the wind doesn't blow. The fire doesn't burn.

When my people pray, I will breathe on that flame and ignite it and the fire will spread. The revival fire will spread. We need the ruach, the breath of God.

And he breathes upon us and the wind blows when we pray. When God's people pray, God moves. Whether it's asking him to fill you with his spirit, whether it's asking him to move in the power of his spirit in a church, whether it's asking him to move by the power of his spirit in a town.

I'll tell you an incredible testimony of what God did one time. I was in a prayer meeting of a little church I was pastoring. We were in this little prayer meeting, wasn't very big, probably 15, 20 people.

And I had just shared with them that we need to pray, you know, focus on the glory of God and the souls of men. And we just prayed. And then we just prayed, God, send someone across our path this week who needs you.

I'll never forget exactly what we prayed. Send someone across our path this week who needs you. Now I said this week, as soon as I said amen, the Lord as my witness, this is amazing.

As soon as I said amen, people started getting up to leave the prayer meeting and there was a knock on the door. Come in. He opened the door and it was a man, but he was dressed like a woman.

And this was years ago in the Oklahoma Panhandle and I'd never seen anybody that was transgender before. And if I'm honest with you, brothers and sisters, my first reaction was, I was repulsed by what I saw. But I immediately thought, we just ask God to move and there's a knock on the door.

He said, I just wondered if I could talk to the pastor. I said, sure. He said, my name is Pamela and I knew it wasn't Pamela.

But I said, come in. Everybody left and I said, how can I help you? He said, obviously it's dark outside. He said, when I turned the corner, he said, I'm from Hollywood, California.

Showed me his ID. He says, when I turned the corner, I'm headed back to California. When I turned the corner, we were right on a major crossroads.

He said, my headlights, both of them went completely out. And I just pulled into your parking lot. And he said, I just wanted to ask you if I could sleep in my van until morning and I'll be on my way again.

And I said, absolutely you can. But I said, if you'll let me talk to you, I'll fix your headlights in the morning. I'll pay to have it fixed.

He said, okay. So we began to talk and he talked 90 miles an hour. Just talk, talk, talk, talk, talk.

And I said, I kept trying to press in, you know, to open the door. And finally I said, okay, do you have any spiritual beliefs? He said, yeah, but they would offend you. I said, you won't offend me.

He said, well, I'm pagan, you know, worship. Went into all this pagan worship talk. And all of a sudden as he's talking, I'm praying in my spirit.

And as he's talking, God begins to break my heart. In the natural, I was repulsed. God began to break my heart and I began to see a bruised reed.

I began to see a little boy. I saw a little boy. And when he finally, I could get a word in edgewise.

I said, listen, what happened to you when you were a child? I said, you haven't always been like this. And he backed up and he said, I'll tell you. He said, when I was eight years old, he said, my mom was a Pentecostal pastor.

Didn't, his dad wasn't in the picture. He said, my mom became convinced that I had demons of homosexuality and she physically beat me. He said, I must've been beaten nearly every day.

I wasn't like the other boys on the schoolyard. I got made fun of at school, came home. My mom beats me, come out demons, beating me physically.

And he said, this went on for a long time. And when I was eight years old, she took me to a psychiatric hospital and dropped me off. And I've never seen her since.

My heart is breaking, breaking. I wanted to weep. A little boy, a wounded little boy.

And I said, what happened then? He said, I was in there for several days. And one of the nurses was into Wiccan. She was a practicing witch.

She adopted me. And that's been my mom. That's how I got into this religion.

I tried to share the gospel. He was totally closed. Didn't want to hear anything about it.

And when we finally ended our conversation, I said, listen to me. I said, don't you leave till I get here in the morning because we're going to fix your headlights. But I said, I want you to know something.

We had just prayed and asked God to send someone across our path who needed him. Do you understand how much God loves you to make your headlights go out right in front of the church and to pull into our parking lot? God is pursuing you. And I was pleading with him.

He sort of just shook his head. Went into the, and before he got in the van, I said, look here, we're going to pray tonight that God reveal himself to you and you're going to know it's God. And he got in his van and I went back to the house and got on the phone.

I called every prayer warrior that I knew and I told him the story and I said, you pray tonight like you've never prayed before that God reveal himself to this man and we see him saved. Well, I got up that morning, rushed to the parking lot and he's standing outside of his van, eyes wide open. I said, did you sleep well? I'd been praying he wouldn't sleep all night under the conviction.

I said, did you sleep well? He said, no. I said, what happened? He said, did you see that storm? And I didn't know any storm last night. I said, no, I didn't even know we had a storm last night.

He said, I just had almost dozed off or just had dozed off. And he said, lightning either struck my van or struck right next to it. He said, I heard this boom and this ball of fire.

I said, praise God. I said, that's gotta be God. His eyes were just wide open.

I almost couldn't believe what I was hearing. God literally, you hear God's gonna send a lightning bolt. God literally sent a lightning bolt.

Wake up. And I pleaded with him to come to Jesus. He never would.

I said, okay, let's go down to the, but remember, people are praying. The wind is blowing. When we pray, God moves.

When we believe him and trust him. So we went down to the local car parts store and I got really humbled. We show up and because it was just opening, all the farmers and ranchers are showing up to get parts.

And I'm out there in front of the store with a man who's dressed like a woman with me. And you have to understand the culture, brothers and sisters. You don't see that at all at that time, okay? And my pride, oh, what do I do? And Lord said, love him.

And we went and got the light bulbs and stuff. We came out and we fixed the lights. And the Holy Spirit spoke to me and said, I want you to put your arm around him.

And I want you to pray. And I said, oh, I can't do it. Everybody's coming in, looking at me.

What will they think, Lord? What will they think of me? Staring anyway. And I said, and I never called him Pamela because I told him, I said, that's not your name. But I said, God loves you so much.

And I'm wondering if you mind if I put my arm on you and pray. He said, no. And I put my arm around him and began to pray.

And it was as if the Holy Spirit just flooded my soul with the baptism of love for this man. And I'm praying to God that he would reveal his love to him. This man starts crying right in front of all the farmers and ranchers and everybody going in.

And I'm pleading with him, just come to Jesus. Don't you see how God is pursuing you? Just come to Jesus. He'll give you a new life, a brand new beginning.

Pleading with him. He sort of nodded his head. I can't tell you that I know he was born again.

I never saw him after that day. But here's what I can tell you. Only our God can do something like that.

And only our God, he does something like that when his people humble themselves and pray in faith. Expecting him to move. Expecting the wind to blow.

Expecting the fire to burn. So my plea with you brothers and sisters this morning is first personal. If you are that bruised reed in that dying flame, the weak, the weary, the wounded, the wanderer who made a mess of your life, will you just have the faith to step up and step out and say, Jesus, I'm coming to you.

Just as I am, I'm coming to you. You know what you will find? He will embrace you with open arms. And he will clean you up.

He will never leave you the same. You come to him just as you are, but he will never leave you just as you are. God doesn't save anybody that he doesn't change.

So expect to be changed. But for those who are saved, and you say, I'm a believer. There's the embers there.

The life is there. But Brian, I'm just smoking. I'm weak.

I'm not helping anybody. I'm not shining anywhere. I'm bound by fear.

I'm overcome by lust. I'm defeated by anger. I'm in the grip of bitterness.

Confess your sin to God and Jesus. Ask him, forgive me, cleanse me. It's simple.

Trust him. You can be clean today. You can be free.

He's not going to fill an unclean vessel. But you come by way of the cross. Allow Jesus to cleanse your soul.

And then ask him now, Lord, fill me. Breathe on me, O breath of God. Breathe on me, O breath of God.

Fill me, Holy Spirit. Fill me up to overflowing. And he will change you into a whole new man.

A whole new woman. I know that because God is who he says he is. And he's the same yesterday, today, and forever.

He has not changed. What he did then, he will do now. Amen.

Let's stand to our feet.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/ZtvM2tjPy8Q.mp4>

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