

The Humble Will Be Lifted Up

by Carter Conlon

The sermon emphasizes the importance of humility and submission to God in order to resist the devil and live a life that is pleasing to God.

Duration: 45:47

Scripture: Romans 6:5, Romans 8:11, Philippians 2:5-8, James 4:6-8

Topics: "Humility And Pride", "Gods Sovereignty"

Description

This sermon from James chapter 4 focuses on the theme of humility and surrendering to God's will. It emphasizes the need to let go of self-effort, pride, and worldly desires, and to fully trust in God's plan for our lives. The message highlights the importance of resisting the devil, drawing near to God, and allowing Him to lift us up in His time.

Transcript

James chapter 4, please, if you go there in the New Testament, after the book of Hebrews, is James chapter 4, the message is called the humble will be lifted up, the humble will be lifted up, let's pray together, now Father I thank you God, for your word, it's only by your word and it's only by your spirit that we will ever understand your kingdom. God give us an understanding today, open our hearts, open our minds to eternal truths, Lord it's only the truth that will set us free from the limitations of our body and from the fears of our mind, God from all of the things around us that try to encroach and drive out the life of Christ, only the truth can set us free, oh God would you give us a heart for truth today, would you give me the ability Lord to be able to speak the words that you've given me, Lord it's deeper than I understand and it's farther Lord than I can go, it has to be something that is birthed in every heart in this sanctuary by the Holy Spirit, give us the ability to understand, oh Jesus I thank you with all my heart God for what you're going to do today, I praise you God I know it in my spirit you're about to do something profound for many many who are here today, I thank you for it in your precious name, amen. Now humble will be lifted up, now before I read this I just want you to keep in mind that there are two things in scripture, the Bible says in the last days that everything that can be shaken will be shaken, now I trust that we'll have a deeper understanding of that by the end of this message, what can be shaken and why will it be shaken, and also the Apostle Paul in Thessalonians speaks of a great falling away is going to happen in the last day, there's going to be a separating as it is in what has professed to be the church of Jesus Christ but it really never fully has been, that portion, and Paul said it would be a great falling away, it would be noticeable, there would be significant numbers, there would be a falling away not just in society but from many who

attended the house of God who've never really fully been part of the life that Christ has for His people, and there's something that will come into their heart and into their mind that will draw them away, and you'll understand I believe after we're through this, James chapter 4 beginning at verse 1, from whence come wars and fighting among you? Come they not hence even of your lusts that war in your members? You lust and have not, you kill and desire to have and cannot obtain.

You fight in war and yet you have not because you ask not. You ask and receive not because you ask amiss that you may consume it upon your lusts. You adulterers and adulteresses, know you not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God, whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

Do you think that the scripture says in vain, the spirit that dwells in us lusts to envy, but he gives more grace, wherefore he says, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God, resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you.

Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be afflicted and mourn and weep, let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord and he shall lift you up.

Now James is writing to the twelve tribes of Israel that have been scattered. Now, historians essentially say most likely this was after the martyrdom of Stephen, a young disciple who was killed by an enraged crowd, who were offended at his challenging of their spirituality, really what he was doing. He was challenging the spiritual people who considered themselves the spiritual elite of the day.

They were offended at his theology, they were offended at the fact that he claimed to have an open vision of heaven and he saw Christ and they killed him. And most likely they were emboldened as it is by this murder and getting away with this murder and the scripture tells us that the church was scattered. This was a persecuted time.

James is the half-brother of Jesus Christ. He was one of the children of Mary and Joseph after Christ was born. He was the head of the church in Jerusalem and most likely he wrote the first book that we have of the New Testament.

Now James was acutely aware of the conditions and problems of the early church that just as in our day were keeping many in spiritual poverty and powerlessness. Now you'd think this is a persecuted church. This is the first generation after the cross.

Surely this has got to be a pure church. These people are living for God. They're walking with God.

Now I do believe that James is not necessarily speaking about inherent problems that were in the early church as much as the Holy Spirit is giving him an understanding of what is in all of us all throughout time. What are the core issues? What depth of weakness is in every human person, you and me as well as those in that generation that may cause a falling away from God, that may cause us to be less than what God has called us to be? And James is writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit those very things that are found in your life and they're found in my life. Whether or not we want to readily admit it, everything in these verses of Scripture is in us.

At least in measure there's something in all of us. In chapter 4 verse 1 he speaks about unsundered desires among the people were keeping many people troubled on the inside and in conflict with other

people on the outside. He said, where are wars and fighting coming from among you? Do they not have their origin? In other words, come they not hence of the unsundered desires as it is for personal gain and pleasure that war in your members? James said, is that not the root of it? Is that not why there's fighting in the body that one wants to be before the other? One wants to be greater than other people.

There's this striving inside of the heart and their desires really that are not surrendered to the will of God and it's causing what he calls wars and fighting. From the smallest level, the biggest level would be a church split where a lot of people are really hurt because of pride and arrogance or somebody that exalts himself and wants to start leading the people to the person who comes in and gets all mad because somebody else is sitting in their seat. And they somehow believe they have a God-given right to that seat because they've been sitting in it for five years or whatever the case may be.

And so they sit in the service, they can't worship, can't raise their hands, can't glorify God because there's something so utterly profound like somebody's in my seat. Verse two, he says, everything which many thought would make them happy seems always out of reach. He said, you lust and have not, you kill, verse two rather, and desire to have, you cannot obtain, you fight in war, and yet you have not because you ask not.

You might be like that today, never satisfied. Why? I read in the scriptures that Jesus said, whoever comes to me will not hunger and never thirst. So why am I so hungry? Why am I thirsty all the time? Why am I not satisfied? Why am I driven from meeting to meeting, service to service, tape to tape, conference to conference, and yet I'm not finding the truth of this? If this is true, and that might even be a question in your heart, why is it out of my grasp? Why am I always grasping and I can't obtain? Why am I fighting to get it and not obtaining it? And then you try prayer, but in verse three, he says, you ask then and receive not because you ask amiss that you may consume it upon your lusts.

And there are many people today that prayer just seems so fruitless and unanswered. I go to prayer, but God's not answering my prayer. Now there's a reason for this.

James says you're praying, but you're asking God to bless something that he's not called you to be. You're asking him to endorse a path that he's not put your feet on. You're asking him to make you something that he has not designed you to be.

You have a plan. It isn't God's plan. It's a plan that's coming from the lust of your own heart.

And maybe you've sat in a place where somebody stood, supposedly speaking for God, and told you some great thing that's supposed to come into your life, and so you're holding tenaciously to that. It's a wrong view. And you pray, but your prayer seemingly is never answered.

The bottom line is that many were still embracing the core values of a fallen world. That's why it seems so strong for James to be writing this to a persecuted church, and he calls them adulterers and adulteresses. But basically he's saying you are still embracing the value system of this world.

You still haven't made a transference, as it is, of your heart into the kingdom of God. You're still not embracing the ways of God. Your thoughts are still not in line with the thoughts of God.

Your ways are not in line. You're not a whole lot different, James is saying, than the people in the world. You just have God attached to all of it.

You want gold, you want position, you want power, you want comfort, you want wealth, you want retirement at 62, or whenever it comes your way, you want to live your days in the Caribbean singing songs and praising God. But that's the value system of a fallen world that seeks comfort here and now, and seeks it at the expense of any person that they have to walk over to get to it. Seeks it at the expense of others, has really no heart.

Remember the Old Testament prophet talked about those who lie on beds of ivory and anoint themselves with the chiefest of ointments and sing songs with instruments of music like David, but they have absolutely no grieving in their heart for those who are headed to a Christless eternity. The prophet said those are the ones who are going to go captive first. When captivity comes, they will go first before anybody else.

That's the bottom line. That's why James says in verse 7, he says, submit yourselves therefore to God, resist the devil and he will flee from you. Now everybody likes to think the devil is out there, and nobody wants to believe the devil might actually be in here.

This is where it starts to make a little more sense. You see, Satan came down into the Garden of Eden. There was a man and a woman there, Adam and Eve, who were quite content to be where they were and to be who they were and to do what they were called to do.

It was full. It was good enough. It was all that God had given them, and it was sufficient.

But Satan, you see, according to Ezekiel, had been up an anointed cherub in heaven, and he just, he saw the glory of God, and he saw where he stood, and in his own sight he was lower than God, and he was offended at that. And he led, according to the scriptures, a rebellion in heaven, and was cast into the earth, and came down into the Garden of Eden, and went to Adam and Eve and said, hey, there's a lot more than what you've got here. You know, God's got you in this little box, tending this garden, naming animals, and doing such like meeting with him occasionally, but life is meant to be a whole lot more than that.

Did you know that you can be as God? You can chart your own course. You can plot your own destiny. You can say things about yourself, and they'll come into existence.

You can confess it and possess it. You can be as God. You can be just as God is.

All you have to do is just agree with me. And when Adam and Eve agreed, the nature of Satan was sown into the human race. And when James says, resist the devil, folks, I want you to understand, it's not an outside devil necessarily, it's an inside devil.

It's that very nature that was sown into you and I that makes us pursue something that is other than the will and the way of God for our lives. To seek happiness other than where God has planted us. To seek to be other than what God has made us.

To seek to do other than what God has called us to do. Falling right into the trap that Adam and Eve fell into. This inner voice always saying, there's more, there's more, don't be boxed in.

You can be great. You can be number one. You can be first in your field.

You can be number one on the job. You can have the best seat in the house of God. You should be the soloist singing in the choir all the time.

Satan is always, always, always, always, and still trying to infuse that fallen nature and work on that fallen nature that he sowed when he sowed that seed of rebellion against God in the human race in the garden of Eden. That's why James says resist the devil. Resist these thoughts in your heart.

Resist the temptation to be other than what God has called you to be. Resist it. Stand against it in the truth of God.

Say, no, I'm not called to be other than what God has called me to be. And I will be content. David the psalmist said it the best.

Let others pursue what they want to pursue. I'll be happy, David said, with your likeness when I get up in the morning. I'll be happy to have you before me.

I'll be happy to know that I'm walking in your will and in your way. I'll be happy. Oh, there'll be so many one day that stand before the throne of God and what a tragedy it's going to be to find out that they've been so outside of the life of Christ, so far away from what God has called us to be and the true destiny that he has for each of us.

Mark, chapter 8, verses 31 to 33, Jesus started to teach his disciples, and he said, the scripture says he spoke openly, he taught them openly, and he said, now this is the way, I'm paraphrasing, but here's what he said, this is the way it's going to be. The Son of Man is going to be delivered up to the priests, the scribes, and the Pharisees. I'm going to be rejected of them, I'm going to be put to death, and I'm going to be raised again from the dead on the third day.

Now he said it as plainly as it could be said. The scripture says that Peter took him and began to rebuke him. Peter took him, now listen, this is not for you, Lord, no, you don't need to do this, you see, you're God, you're the Son of God, we know you're the Son of God, and as the Son of God, you really don't need to do this, you've got all power, you've got all authority, I don't know all what Peter said, but the scripture says he was rebuking God.

This doesn't have to be, does it sound familiar? Does it sound like Satan in the Garden of Eden? No, you don't have to walk this path, no, there's more for you than this. Surely, surely, I mean, we've seen you calm the seas, we've watched you give sight to the blind, you raised Lazarus from the dead, we've watched lepers healed, we've seen people purified, we've watched storms calm, we know you have all authority and power, surely, surely, there's more for you than this, than to be given up to the religious hypocrites of the day and let them beat you and put you to death. You can see Peter is speaking from that nature that's shown in all of us, it's in all of the human race, that nature of Satan that says, no, this can't be right, it's the natural man, it's the natural reasoning, it's the one that Paul says to whom the preaching of the cross is foolishness, doesn't understand it, doesn't get it, doesn't realize that suffering might be part of the Christian life, suffering might be the cup that you and I have to drink of, no, can't handle this, and puts it all away and says, no, no, that's not what the church is about, no, no, that's not what we're destined for, no, sure, no suffering for us, no sickness for us, no trials for us, no tribulation for us, no poverty for us, oh, no, no, no, it's just a golden subway all the way into heaven.

Peter is speaking from his fallen nature and Jesus knew the origin of this type of reasoning. And the scripture says in verse 33, it said, he turned and looked at all of his disciples, not just Peter, he looked at all the disciples and said, get thee behind me, Satan, for thou savourest, or you don't have any taste for the things that be of God, but the things that be of men. Now I believe that Jesus is looking right through his disciples right back into the garden of Eden, because he knows whose voice has been sown in fallen man.

Get behind me, Satan, you're not going to keep me from this pathway that God has for me. You're not going to keep me from doing the work of my Father. I'm not going to succumb to your temptation that there's a better and an easier and a more purposeful way to live than to be in the perfect will of God.

Now James says in chapter 4 again, in verses 5, he says, do you think that the scripture says in vain, the spirit in us, the spirit that dwelleth in us lusts to envy, but he gives more grace. Wherefore he says, God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, verse 10, in the sight of the Lord and he shall lift you up.

So the question now is, how do I humble myself? You ever tried that? How do I humble myself? Is it a posture? Do I adopt a humble posture? When I was a kid, my mom and dad took me to church and there was an old priest, and he would sit up when the service was going on and he really, really had humility down to an art. You know he had, I can't even imitate him, he had the proper, he had big bellies, he had the proper folding of his hands, he had the downturn of his mouth, and he'd sit there like really humble looking. The only problem is he slept through the whole thing.

And I was just a kid, I was 5 or 6 years old, and I used to wonder, how does he sleep without his mouth falling open? I mean, he really has this thing down to an art. And I remember thinking as a child, as best as I can remember it anyway, it mustn't be very important to him to be in church that he sleeps through the whole thing. Him and my grandfather, actually, both slept through it virtually every church time that we went to.

How do I humble myself? Do I beat myself up in front of people? Do I walk around with my head down saying I'm just a lowly, miserable sinner, unworthy? I've known people who've tried that, yet inwardly when they pray they thank God they're not like other people are. That's a difficult road to hoe. Do I tell others how humble I am? Hey, have you noticed how humble I am lately? Anybody here noticed it? When I was a pastor in Canada, I had a fellow that just went out of his way to tell me how humble he was all the time.

And he had a humble, like he walked humbly, he had this humble thing. And he would really, if you didn't notice, he would let you know how humble he was. But he had a problem, you see, when we would have a prayer meeting or a Bible study, if I didn't get there before he did, he had a propensity to open the Scripture and bring out some of the more difficult passages, passages that caused debate and dispute.

And sometimes by the time I got there people were so heated they could hardly pray or worship God. So I went to the humble man's house. And he lived just down the road from me.

I went to his house and I said, now, I said, there seems to be a problem here. I said, every time I come to a prayer meeting, you've got a place in such an uproar that people can hardly pray. And I said, but it's under the guise of spiritual debate.

And I said, according to what I read in Proverbs, only by pride comes contention. I said, so when I get to the prayer meeting there's contention, so I would suggest, and I tried to be very kind to the man, I would suggest that it's pride in you that's causing this contention that follows you everywhere you go. Well, he got so mad at me, not only did he leave the church, he sold his house and moved.

Because I had challenged his humility. Very difficult when you challenge a proud man's humility. Peter came to an understanding.

Now, Peter's rebuked by Christ, but eventually comes to an understanding of something. Now, Peter's got a tremendous zeal. He's the one that gets up and tells Jesus, though everybody is offended, I won't be.

Though everybody flees, I'm with you. I'm going to go with you, Jesus. I'm going to go with you right into Jerusalem.

And if you die there, I'll die there with you, but I won't abandon you. He's got this tremendous zeal, even in spite of the fact that Jesus tells him clearly he doesn't, but the pride in his heart won't let him hear it. Christ is trying to tell him, no, Peter, you're just like every other man.

You're a coward at heart, and when it comes down to it, your fear and confusion and the difficulty of the hour are going to send you into a tailspin, and three times you're going to deny that you've ever known me. But Peter, having a direct word spoken to his heart, still resists it because he's a zealous man, and in his own mind he's very strong, and he's very capable and very able of getting to the end goal of his own life. He has a view of himself as strong, a view of being courageous.

It's not a right view, it's a false view. And many, many people are gripped with a false view because it has no correlation to truth. It has no correlation to really the way God sees us.

And then after he denies Christ, the scripture says that he fled, and he's broken, and he's weeping and sobbing, and finally his image of himself has come crashing down into the ground. And I assume he's so despaired at that point he probably thought there's no hope of a future. I've been abandoned by God.

I tried to serve Him, but I couldn't do it. I wanted, I really in my heart wanted to do these things, and I truly believed I was this kind of a man or this kind of a person, only to find out that I'm not, and I'm a dismal failure. Surely God is going to reject me.

He's humbled now in his own sight. He's humbled in the sight of God. He's humbled in the sight of his brethren, because they all know the boasts he made, and they all know he ran, just like all the rest of them did.

And somehow he ends up in an upper room, gathered together, the scripture says, with the door closed in John chapter 20 because of fear. And suddenly Jesus appears, and he says to Peter, he says to the rest, peace, as my father has sent me, even so send I you. Peace, humble yourself in the sight of the Lord, and he will lift you up.

Jesus does not come to him with condemnation. He now comes to him with the true commission. As my father sent me, as I came into the world as a child, as I was totally dependent on the life of my father, as my father's voice was the voice that governed me, my father's will was the will that I embraced.

My father's path was the path that I walked on. My father's rejection was even the rejection that I had to suffer so a fallen world could come back to God again. As my father sent me, not in my own strength, not in my own plans, not in my own wisdom, but in the strength and wisdom of almighty God, even so now I send you.

Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord, and he will lift you up, as the scripture says. The apostle Paul is a man who has knowledge. Paul has incredible knowledge.

Paul is most likely the most brilliant theologian of the New Testament. And yet with all that knowledge, he knew that knowledge alone was not enough to bring him to the place that God desired for his life. And many people feel that if I study, if I read, now that's good that you study and read.

And you should memorize scripture. We should know these books as the back of our hand. We should have this knowledge of the word of God.

But knowledge itself, knowledge itself without a surrendered heart only puffs a person up, only makes a person proud. Romans 7, Paul says it this way. Let me paraphrase Paul for time's sake.

I know what to do, Paul says. I know what to do. And I actually delight in doing it in my inner man.

But there's a war inside of me, Paul says. There's another force inside of me that is constantly dragging me in another direction so that the things I know to do, I'm not doing. And the things I don't want to do, I find myself doing.

Does it sound familiar to anybody today? And Paul says, who will deliver me from the body of this death? All of his knowledge could not deliver him. Everything he knew to do, he couldn't do. And it can become a source of despair in the Christian life when we read the scriptures and we say, well, I should be kind.

I should be loving. I should be loving my wife as Christ loves the church. I should be honoring and respecting my husband.

I should be an example to my children. I should be the best employee on my job. I should be honest in all my day.

And we see it and say, God, I can't do it. I can't do it. Even knowing that I can't do it.

There's a law at work inside of me that keeps drawing me down into a behavior and speaking and doing things that I don't want to do. And Paul says, who will deliver me from the body of this death? I feel like a walking dead man, Paul says. I have such an ability to change in and of myself.

Who will deliver me? And then in the last verse, he says, oh, thanks be to God through Jesus Christ. Thanks be to God that when I finally acknowledge that I can't do this, it's not possible for me to live the Christian life on my own. I'm not called to chart my own course.

I'm not called to create my own destiny and ask God to bless you. I'm called to follow him. I'm called to give up the rights to my life and walk with a Holy Savior.

I'm called to let his mind be formed in me. His life become my life. His ways become my ways.

His purpose become my purpose. His plan become my plan. And then the power of God will come upon me.

Paul says in Philippians 2 verses 5 to 8, let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of man and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Let this mind be in you. He committed himself to the Father, to the only one who could raise him from the dead.

Here is my point. Everything God's given me to speak on is summed up in one sentence. True humility comes when all self-effort dies.

When you and I finally realize that we can't live this life on our own. We're not called to live this life on our own. We're not called to direct God.

We're not called to be God. We're not called to be as God. We're called to let God be God in us and to us.

And just as Jesus said to Peter, when you were young, you dressed yourself, you went where you want to go and you did what you want to do. But as you're growing older now, this is Peter, this is humble Peter. This is the Peter that's being lifted up.

You will stretch forth your hands and you will be led into places that you can't go and places you don't in your natural want to go. But thank God that Peter obeyed God. Thank God that his life became yielded to Jesus Christ.

Thank God we have the history of this man being raised up out of brokenness and brought into the life of Christ as our example today in the scriptures of a man who can fail and yet out of failure can find the strength of God. True humility is when all self-effort dies. Every plan B is gone.

Even if it's a little B. Way over there. Gone. There are no outs.

There are no more exits. There are no more alternate strategies. I'm going to live for God, you say in your heart, and I'm trusting God to live his life through me.

And I'm going to let God be glorified in me. If I'm in a garden tending plants and that's what God has for me, then that's good enough. But I'm going to dwell in him.

He's going to dwell in me. I'm going to abide in him. He's going to abide in me.

And wherever I am, I'm going to glorify him. I'm going to let his life be my strength. I'm going to draw on the resource of his life moment by moment, day by day, hour by hour.

I will not form my own plans. I will not walk in my own strength because deep down I know that my zeal cannot get me through and knowledge is insufficient. I need Christ.

I need the risen Christ to lift me up. Romans 6, 5 Paul says, if we've been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall also be in the likeness of his resurrection. If we are willing as he was to go to a cross.

Now Jesus Christ had to trust that his father would raise him from the dead. It's that simple. Father into thy hands, he said, I commit my spirit.

He had to trust that what his father had told him his father would do. He had yielded up his life and he had the promise, son, I'm going to raise you from the dead on the third day. And he had to be willing to be, and if we are willing to be planted in the likeness of his death, that we give up striving and trying and planning.

And we say, father, into thy hands, I commit my spirit. Lord, I'm dead in this area. I'm afraid in this other one.

I'm powerless in this one and I'm sinning in this one, but oh God, I don't know how to get out. So I commit myself into your hands. You see, that's humility.

That is really what humility is. It's not a posture. It's nothing we say from our lips to other people.

It's not some kind of stature or status we take in the church. It's an issue of the heart. You see, humility is not before man, it's before God.

God knows those that are humble. And the scripture tells us in James, he resists the proud and gives grace to the humble. He resists those that are still trying in their own strength, still planning with their own minds.

But those who have given their lives to Christ and saying, you have it all, God, it's all yours. I'm trusting that you'll raise me from the dead. You'll give me life.

He says he gives grace to the humble. If we be dead with Christ, Paul said, we believe that we shall also live with him. Romans 8, 11, Paul says, but if the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his spirit that dwelleth in you.

Quickened by the spirit of God. As long as we're walking in the plan of God, quickened, quickened by the spirit of God. Humble yourselves, James 4, 10 says, in the sight of the Lord and he shall lift you up.

Verse 7, submit yourselves therefore to God, resist the devil and he will flee from you. Resist self-exaltation, human reasoning and human strength. Resist it, folks, with everything that God gives you, resist it.

Verse 8, he says, draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Cleanse your hands.

In other words, all the efforts, all the grabbing and scratching at something of this world, all the pushing aside of other people to get what you think is the objective that will make your life worthwhile. That's why James says, cleanse your hands. Those hands don't represent Christ.

Put those hands away, cleanse them because they've not got the will of God in them. And purify your hearts. Let my will be in line with the will of God.

Purify your hearts. Now, I would love to be able to stand here today and tell you that I've never had a plan B in my life, but it wouldn't be true. There's been a small one.

And it's probably been behind the curtain over there. You can still see it from here, though. Just a little thought in my mind.

If my health doesn't hold out, well, this is what I'll do. Just a little plan B. And the Lord recently has asked me, give me a plan B. Give me your little plan B. There is no plan B. Because if you hold to another view other than what God has called for your life, the B will get closer and it will get bigger. And when times get tough, it will get within reach.

You see, Satan will give it right to you. He'll bring it out on a silver platter and say, oh, here, have you considered this? Is where you're living a little too stressful? Is it a little too tough? Are you finding it too hard? Try this. This way will be a lot easier for you.

This will be a much more fulfilling pathway for you to follow and fall. Purify your hearts. I feel in my heart that there's no plan B. There's no little plan B. There's no little plan C, D, E, or F. They're all gone.

I feel in my heart honestly that I can stand before you and say they're given to God. I'm in this thing until I die. Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord.

Humble yourself. And you'll see today that prison doors start to open. Your eyes start to see truth.

The wounds of your heart begin to be healed. You begin to be renewed in strength and vision and hope for the future. You begin to see smallness in yourself as not something that's insignificant.

You don't feel that you have to be standing before thousands to be appreciated in the sight of God, but you're just doing what God called you to do. You're a great store clerk. You're a good cop.

Whatever you're called to be, whatever you're called to do, you're simply doing it as unto the Lord. You don't have to be preaching to thousands. You just let God be God where you are.

And if He changes that, then it's up to Him to change it because you're not the one forming the plan. You just say to God, you know where I am. I remember after going through a great dealing of God in Canada, where it really took my strength away for a season because I was very driven to preach the gospel and felt I had some kind of a duty to do so.

And the Lord took my strength away. And I remember saying to Him after this was all over and He finally told me, He said, look, I haven't called you to travel the world. I've called you to... There's 158 people at that time on the role of this church that you're pastoring, and that's what you will answer for.

You're not going to answer for the thousands you've preached to. As a matter of fact, the Lord told me there'd be no reward for it because I didn't call you to do it. But you will answer for these people and you will answer for their children and you will answer for where they are.

When you stand before me one day, I'm going to say, where are the people I gave to you? I died for them and I put them in your care. Where are they? That's all you're responsible for. And I remember praying a prayer.

I said, well, Lord, I'm going to give the rest of my life to this. And I'm going to be happy. I felt released to be happy and content there.

No more drivenness. And I prayed. I remember these words.

I said, Lord, you know where I am and you know my phone number. I'm not a mystic. I don't hear voices that often.

I'm not a mystic. So if you want me to ever consider something else, just have somebody call me. And of course, that's what happened a few months later.

Pastor David called. But that was my prayer. And there was a peace in it.

There was a peace in my heart that I don't need to go anywhere. I don't need to do anything but be what I am and let God be God in me where he's planted me. Greatness is not about crowds.

It's not about people noticing and saying, oh, wow, have you seen so-and-so? Have you heard the tape? That's not greatness. Greatness, it's all going to be turned around, folks, when we get into heaven. It's just all going to be turned around.

A lot of big players are going to be standing at the back wondering why their names are not being called. As the grandmothers had prayed and the mums and dads, the single mums had brought their kids to church every Sunday in spite of all the opposition, their names are called and all heaven stands and applauds and suddenly we begin to realize what greatness is in the sight of God, what it really means to be lifted up, who really was strong in the midst of this battle, who didn't fall away because they had to learn to fight and they had to learn to lean on God in the midst of hidden struggles and battles that nobody else saw. I implore you with everything that's in my heart.

Folks, there's going to be a great falling away and hardship is going to produce that falling away in the coming days. You've got to hear this today. You have to have the courage to be humbled in the sight of God.

It doesn't matter what men think. It's what God sees. Be humbled in the sight of God.

Have the willingness to admit, I can't fight this. I can't do this. Lord, I'm driven by ambition.

Oh God, I'm perpetually discontent. I'm argumentative. If you're fighting at home, husbands and wives, somebody's proud.

If one or both of you are proud, there would be no contention. Just deal with it honestly and humble yourself in the sight of the Lord. Your kids, I'm telling you, you might like that priest I talked about, you might adopt that holy stature, but I'm telling you, your kids know if you're spiritually asleep.

Five year old can discern you if you're a phony. Oh folks, please, in Christ's name, hear this. Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord.

I want to give an altar call today. We're going to worship for almost a half hour, but I want to give an altar call for those that are, this is speaking to your heart. You're so tired of the struggle.

You're so tired of having no peace. You're so tired of not winning the victory. So tired of trying to scratch that inner itch that never seems to be satisfied.

So weary of trying. You get up and you give it your best shot like Peter, but then you fall on your face again. You study more like Paul, but then you find this inner battle that never goes away.

There's only one way out. You finally come to God and say, God, I can't do this. I never could do this.

Forgive me for thinking I could do this. Forgive me for wanting things for my life that you've not called me to be. You've not given these things to me.

God, help me to find and follow your plan for my life. And folks, his plan's not a needle in a haystack. You start loving God with all your heart and you're just going to walk right into it.

He knows where you are. He knows how to get you there. You don't have to figure it out.

You don't have to go home today and worry. So many people go, oh, what is the plan of God? Oh, what is the plan of God? Love him with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. Love your neighbor as yourself, and you will just walk into the plan of God.

Now the plan of God might be that you stay right where you are. You ever thought of that? That might be the plan. You're a clerk in a store, and the Lord's going to lead people to you.

You're going to be able to be a testimony to your co-workers. He's got you where you are. And that might be the plan.

And that's the beauty of finally being humbled in the sight of God. Finally, just pushing the devil out of the Eden of my heart. Satan, get behind me.

I am where God has me. I don't care if my life is to name animals and trim plants and meet with God once in a while. I don't care.

That's where God has me, and that's good enough for me. Get behind me, Satan. I'll not be driven by this inner itch of my fallen nature.

I'll not be driven by it. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

And the Holy Spirit is drawing you and speaking to you today. As we stand in the annex, you could step between the screens if you don't mind, and in the main sanctuary, I'm just going to ask you as we stand, slip out and make your way to this altar, please, especially those who are in a battle that you can't win. Just come, and let's believe God for the strength and for the victory today.

Let's stand, please, if we will. There's really no prayer that I can lead you in, because this is an issue between you and me and God. He sees the heart.

He knows what's in your heart right now. Those that have responded to a physical altar or those who've just come to a spiritual altar in your own heart, God knows that. And if you are truly in a place where you've come before the Lord and you've said, God, your ways, your will for my life, and let me not consider anything too small or insignificant, help me to just bloom where I'm planted, to abide where you've placed me, to be happy, to be a Christian, to come back to that first love like in Ephesus, to stop all the works and just come back to that place of loving God and singing songs of praise and just going through my day saying, I'm here, I'm available, God, whatever you have for my life, that's what I'm going to do.

When they came into that upper room in that state, everybody in that room had failed, folks. They'd all run. Most everybody had denied his name.

They all felt like cowards. They all knew their powerlessness. And he walked into the room and he said, peace.

Shalom. Peace. Be at rest.

Don't be afraid. I'm with you now. And as my father sent me, now I'm sending you.

Now they were ready to be used of God. Isn't that amazing? It's in our nothingness that we're now ready to be used of God. When we think we're something, we're very, very far from what God intended for us.

But it's in nothingness. Now you're not to be, you're not to leave this sanctuary today with your head down, woe is me, I'm nothing. No, you're everything in Christ.

You have everything that heaven has in Christ. There should be bounce in your step. There should be joy in your heart.

There should be an anticipation. There should be freedom and a release. Oh God, thank you.

Thank you, Lord, that I don't have to be any more than what you make me. I don't have to be anywhere other than where you've sent me. I can just be a Christian right where I am.

Lord, just thank you for the freedom of that, the freedom. I don't have to be in another home. I don't have to be in another job.

I don't have to be in another city. I don't have to be in another ministry. I don't have to be in another marriage.

I knew that would hit home somewhere here. I am where God wants me. And I'm going to bloom here by the grace and by the glory of God, I'm going to be a Christian.

I'm going to be a joyful follower of Jesus Christ right where I am. And when I get to heaven, the reward is not because I did some great thing. The reward was that I was obedient to God.

Well done, good and faithful servant. Well done, God will say. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Thank you, Lord.

Hallelujah. Glory to God. Glory to God.

Glory to God.

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