

When God Sends Leanness Into the Soul

by Carter Conlon

Carter Conlon's sermon emphasizes the dangers of spiritual leanness and the importance of trusting God's plan and provision in our lives.

Duration: 1:06:23

Scripture: Psalm 106:10

Topics: "Rest Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the theme of dissatisfaction and lack of trust in God's plan. He starts by referencing the story of Moses in the Old Testament, where Moses expresses frustration and even asks God to kill him because he feels overwhelmed by the responsibility of leading the Israelites. The preacher then moves to the New Testament and talks about the apostle Paul's similar sentiment in 2 Timothy 4, where Paul acknowledges that his time in ministry is coming to an end and expresses his readiness to be offered. The preacher emphasizes the importance of trusting God's plan and being satisfied with His promises, even when we don't fully understand the path. He encourages the audience to allow the Holy Spirit to search their hearts and free them from anything that can hinder their relationship with Christ.

Transcript

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You are welcome to make additional cassettes of this message for free distribution to friends. However, for all other forms of reproduction or electronic transmission, existing copyright laws apply. People here this morning, you're going to be delivered of something that you didn't think was a problem, because I have been.

I believe that if you will allow the Holy Spirit to diligently search your heart, you're going to be set free from something that can rob you of Christ's life, can rob you of his health, that can rob you of everything that he wants for you, and he has destined you to be. But you really, really have to want to hear this today. Father, I thank you, God.

I thank you for your faithfulness. I've never been more aware in my life of the fact that I stand by grace. Everything I have, you've given me.

All that I am, you've made me. And everywhere I'll go, it's simply because that's where you've destined and chosen to take me. God, I pray for an ability to speak this word so that it can be heard.

I pray for a moldability in the hearts of all who hear this word today. I pray, mighty God, that you would make following you, Jesus, the chiefest delight of our lives. But only you can even do this.

Holy Spirit, you have to come and stir us up. You've got to come and fan the flame in each one of our hearts. God, I thank you, Lord, for what you're going to do.

There is a mighty hand of deliverance on this service today. Thank you for it in Jesus' name. Psalm 106 in the Old Testament.

We're going to begin there. I would suggest you put a marker in the index of your Bible, because we're going to be going quickly to several different places, and some of them are some of the lesser-traveled passages in the Bible. So it's probably just wise to put a marker in your index so you can find it quickly.

My message is entitled, When God Sends Leanness into the Soul. When God Sends Leanness into the Soul. Psalm 106, beginning at verse 10.

And he saved them from the hand of him that hated them, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy. And the waters covered their enemies, there was not one of them left. Then believed they his words, they sang his praise.

They soon forgot his works, and waited not for his counsel. But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert. And he gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul.

When God Sends Leanness into the Soul. Now Paul the Apostle, in 1 Corinthians chapter 10, verses 11, 12, and 13, says these words. Let me read them to you.

He said, All these things happened to them for examples. And they are written for our admonition, that means for our sake and our instruction, upon whom the ends of the world are come. And how much more today, if Paul thought that was his portion, in a sense, in his generation, how much more now? Verse 12 says, Wherefore, let him that thinks he stands take heed, which means give earnest and intensive contemplation.

Let him that thinks he stands, or thinks he's okay in these things, looks back in the Bible and says, Okay, I'm not like the children of Israel were. That's not me. I'm not a rebel, I'm not a murmurer, I'm not worshiping a golden calf.

And so these might be examples for some people, but they're not for me. Paul says, Let him that thinks he stands take heed, lest he fall. And then he concludes it with the last verse, verse 13, which when you understand what he's saying, it really brings this verse into a different context.

He says, Therefore, there has no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man. And Paul says, Beware now. There is a common temptation that is found in the hearts of all men.

And he said, The things that happen to the children of Israel are also in all of our hearts. But God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape that you may be able to bear it. Now, when we read that, we always are drawn to thinking about pornography and alcohol and drug addiction and these types of temptation and aren't anything involving any of the lusts of the flesh.

But there are other temptations that you and I may not even be aware of. And only the Holy Ghost can bring it to the surface. Only the Holy Ghost can show us what's really going on in our lives.

And with that, God is faithful. And once we're aware of it, he makes a way to escape it. Go with me now to the book of Numbers in the Old Testament.

That would be your fourth book from the beginning. Numbers chapter 11. We're going to take a look at the children of Israel.

They've been delivered from a great bondage like you and I have. Set free. All of their enemies have been vanquished by the power of God, incredible power.

They've seen miracles just like many here today. You could stand if I gave you opportunity to testify. There are many people today who would stand up and say, Pastor, I'm a walking miracle.

I was given up for dead. The things that were in my life, my family, my friends, they gave me up for dead. There are others that could stand up and say, I was insane.

The things that I might have done had God not intervened. And others could stand up and say, I was tormented in my mind. But I came to Christ and it's as if he drowned all of my former tormentors in the sea behind me.

And now I can honestly say I'm free. I'm free by the power of God. You see the same children of Israel now.

They've been brought up, the scripture says, by a mighty hand. And God drowned all their enemies in the sea. And now there's something very peculiar happening to them.

In chapter 11, verse 10, it says, Then Moses heard the people weep throughout their families, every man in the door of his tent. And the anger of the Lord was kindled greatly, and Moses also was displeased. And Moses said unto the Lord, Wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant? And wherefore have I not found favor in thy sight, that thou layest the burden of all this people upon me? Have I conceived this people? Have I begotten them, that thou shouldst say unto me, Carry them in your bosom as a nursing father, bearing the sucking child unto the land which thou swearest unto their fathers? Now, Moses is exasperated.

He has seen this incredible visitation of God, this marvelous deliverance. And now it says, you have to understand, the warriors that were counted were over 600,000 that were numbered that came out of Egypt. So it's a safe estimation to say there were between 2 and 3 million people that were brought out of bondage.

And it says in the scripture, every man was standing in the door of his tent. I picture at the end of the day, at the end of a travel day. Now, this is not very long.

They're not very long moving towards the promised land here. And you see, at the end of the day, when the standard is set up and everyone is encamped, and at night, instead of being satisfied with everything that God has done, and the fact that He simply promises, I'm taking you to a place that you don't understand. Just believe me.

And just walk with me. You don't understand the pathway. You didn't know how to get out of bondage, and you don't know how to get into freedom.

I brought you out of bondage, and I'm taking you into freedom. It's not up to you. All I require of you is to trust me.

You remember the exasperation of God Himself when He said one time to Moses, How long will it be before these people believe me? Before, in other words, there's a confident trust in me. Moses, you can imagine how credulous it must have been to stand in that camp, at the end of a travel day, and hear every man. Now, if we take that literally, that's over 600,000 men standing and whining in the door of their tents, of their houses.

It's an incredible thing. Moses says they're like nursing infants, whining, never satisfied. And what an incredible picture of human nature this is.

You have to see it. You have to envision. If you and I would be there, we'd be standing on the periphery of the camp, and we'd be dumbfounded and say, What a funny people these are.

Delivered out of such incredible darkness, brought into the life as it is of God. They have the cloud of God's presence going with them by day, and they have the pillar of His fire lighting the camp and keeping them warm by night. They have all these incredible promises of God, and here are 600,000 plus men standing and whining like nursing babies in the door of their tent.

An incredible thing. Weeping at the door as it is, dissatisfied, crying out for what they think they should have. Now, keep that in mind.

Not where they are, not crying because of where they've been, but crying because there's something they think they should have, and they feel that somehow God is withholding it from them. Psalm 106 again says, He saved them, verse 10, from the hand of him that hated them, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy. The waters covered their enemies, and there was none of them left.

Then believed they His words and sang His praise. That's what new Christianity is all about when you first get saved. Do you ever wonder why some here, you're losing your song? Do you ever wonder why there's no force of conviction in your praises anymore? It seems to be the longer you walk with God, the leaner you're becoming.

Something is happening to you and you don't understand why it's happening to you. God, I thought this was up and up all the way. I thought this was from glory to glory.

I seem to be going from dead to deader. I seem to be going from power to weakness. I seem to be taking another turn from everybody.

The longer I am here, the less my song seems to be coming with genuine adoration out of my heart. You see, verse 13 says, they soon forgot His words. They soon forgot about the way God does things.

They soon forgot that His ways are not our ways. They soon forgot that they were required of God to walk by faith into the promised land. It was not a walk of sight.

It never was and never would be. It was absolutely and entirely by faith. They were to walk, they were to trust, they were to believe.

Whether they took a direct route to the promised land or went around the wilderness a hundred times a month, they were to trust because God said, I'm taking you in. Every man was to do exactly what God alone had called him to do. That's really what makes the church of Jesus Christ a harmonious, wonderful place to be when every man knows what he's to do.

When everyone has found Christ as their Savior, obviously, first and foremost. If you don't know Jesus Christ, then this message may appeal to you, but you can't enter in until you have yielded your life to Him. You've acknowledged you've needed a Savior and invited Him into your heart and life to be that Savior and to be your Lord.

But they soon forgot His works and they waited not for His counsel. Now, the word counsel in the Hebrew means His plan, His design, His purpose. They soon forgot the way God does things.

And isn't that the way you and I have a tendency to be? We get saved, we get free, we get delivered, we come to church, we sing, I'm free, I'm free. Jesus broke the chains that bound me. And we read the Bible, we learn the Scriptures, but we are all inclined to do the same thing the children of Israel did.

We begin to forget this is not our plan. This is God's plan. This is not our salvation.

This is God's salvation which He has freely given to me. You remember the psalmist David when he sinned against the Lord. He said, restore unto me the joy of thy salvation.

Not my salvation. Thy salvation. This is your idea.

You bought it with your blood. This is your free gift. God, I once knew that.

I once knew it was all by grace. I once was absolutely content to be exactly where, doing exactly what you called me to do. God, restore to me the joy of thy salvation.

They lusted exceedingly in the wilderness and tempted God in the desert. You see, they were in a place where their understanding was still incomplete, just like you and I are. We don't have the full picture.

Only God sees the picture. I don't really know what part I play. I have an understanding of what I'm doing today, but I don't know where my life fits for the days ahead.

That's not up to me. It's up to me to seek in person His kingdom, and it's up to God to do what He wants to do through my life. I don't have to figure it out.

Thank God you and I are free from figuring out what we're going to do tomorrow, and where we're going to be, or what kind of ministry He's going to give us. It really doesn't matter. All we do is seek Him, and all the rest of it comes out of His life within us.

Instead of trusting Him in this place where their understanding was incomplete, they tested Him by inferring that He was withholding something from them that was good, and that they needed for their

well-being. That's an incredible thing. The influence really is, they tested Him in the wilderness.

They said, well, can God provide a table? Number one was, does He have the ability? And number two, there was another direct inference. He's withholding from us. He's brought me out, yes, and He's got me in some kind of a plan that they don't understand.

And all He gives me to sustain me is this manna from heaven. And really, what this whole passage of Scripture is about 1 Psalm 106, they began to cry out for meat. Oh, we want more.

We know what we need, God. Six hundred thousand. Crying out like whining babies.

We know. God, I know what I need for my life. Let me give you some counsel, God.

Let me advise you. I need more than just promises. I need meat.

I need something I can chew on and see and taste and feel. I need some kind of store and supply that gratifies me. Six hundred thousand in the door of their tent, crying, whining.

And Moses says, God, what have you done to me? Where am I going to get the strength to carry three million babies into the promised land? You know, Moses was so exasperated in the verse right after that, he said, kill me, please. He said, if you're not going to take this away from me, kill me. That's an incredible thing.

Now, in 2nd Timothy, chapter 4 in the New Testament, we see an example of this very same thing in chapter 4, verses 6 to 10. This influence that God is withholding, this satisfaction with the plan and purpose of God. Paul, the apostle, says to Timothy, this is near the end of his life in ministry.

In 2nd Timothy 4, verse 6, he says, For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I've fought a good fight. I've finished my course.

I've kept the faith. You see, beloved, you have to understand, Paul is totally satisfied with having followed the will of God. He had people all around him telling him, don't go here, don't do this, don't do that.

At the end of his life, he ends up with churches that are in rebellion, in some cases, to truth. He ends up challenged. The very authority of his apostleship is challenged by false teachers.

And many of the people that he had led to Christ were even starting to believe it. You can hear the grief when he writes to the Corinthian church that's in his heart. He ends up in jail with nothing left, perhaps, but a pen and a piece of parchment.

And in that jail, he just, always as always, being led by the Holy Ghost, just simply begins to pen some letters to some old friends at the end of his life. Oh, I thank God that Paul didn't try to circumvent the plan of God. I thank God that he didn't try to figure out what would be better, because he would have gone to another place.

And you think of the letters, for example, the one we're reading now. We wouldn't have it in our hands had Paul gone another course. How could he know he was writing the Word of God? How could he know the Holy Spirit was using his life and obedience and example and just simple trust in the plans of God to write something down that would continue to affect multiples of millions of people, even today, in New York City, this year, in Times Square Church.

We are being affected by the words of an obedient man who didn't fully understand the plan, but understood the man who had devised the plan for his life. Henceforth, he said, there's laid up for me a crown of righteousness. Paul said, I've done it God's way.

I know, in spite of what Agabah says, in spite of any of the other prophets, or any of the other people around who may think I've wasted my life, I know that I have done what God called me to do. I know there's a crown of righteousness awaiting me, which the Lord, he says, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but to all them that love his appearing. Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me.

Verse 10, For Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world. That's an incredible thing. Paul is walking a road of faith and trust in the plan of God, and he considers himself forsaken by a former friend, a man that you find in some of the other books of the Bible who was with him, or listed among those that were with him.

At the end of his days, Demas, Paul says, Paul didn't just say Demas went to another place. He said, no, Demas has forsaken me. Demas doesn't want the ways of God.

Demas has another way that he wants to walk, and Paul calls it the way of the world. Beloved, I don't feel in my spirit that Demas, necessarily in his own sight, was backslidden. I think he just got tired.

I think the denial of self and the trust in God were just simply unappealing to him. I think that perhaps he felt that Christian life should have more to offer him. Paul, there's got to be more.

There's got to be more than just these little crowds of people in these forever jail cells. There's got to be more, Paul. I think there's more than what you and I have been previously experiencing.

I wonder sometimes, did he try to make his departure spiritual? Did he say to Paul, Paul, God has something else for me, something greater, something much more fulfilling. He's got something better for me. I just know he's got something great for me.

And Demas packing his bag and saying goodbye to Paul with all of his suffering and all of the misunderstanding around him and saying, I'm off to Thessalonica. I'm heading off, Paul. And God be with you.

God be praised. And Paul, when he writes to Timothy, says, Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world. How it must have grieved Paul as he faded from his sight.

Perhaps Paul was confined again. I'm not really sure at this point, but is it possible that he watched him walk away from the will of God for his life? And as he faded from Paul's sight, he faded from scriptural history as well. I want to remind you of that.

We never hear from this man again. We certainly hear from the Apostle Paul, but we never, ever hear of the name of Demas again. Went on to what he thought was great and had no idea he was heading into obscurity.

He was heading away from the will of God for his life. Psalm 106 again, verse 15 says, He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul. Now, the word request in the Hebrew means their petition or their prayer.

Now, you've got to understand something. These people that are standing in the doors of their tent, as far as they're concerned, they're praying. So he granted their prayer.

Oh God, you know I love you. But I'm just so tired of only having this manna. I'm so tired of where we are.

Oh God, you know I so long to be somewhere else. You see, that's a common affliction of humanity. Not just the Israelites of that day, it's your affliction and my affliction.

Human nature is never satisfied. We're never satisfied with where we are. We're never fully satisfied with what God has given us to do.

And we're never satisfied with what he has given us to do it with. And if we think we need change and even cry out to God for it, we are warned that change might come. But with it will come a leanness of soul.

That's an incredible thing. What if God has called you to be, I'm only going to use this as an example. What if he has called you to be a counselor in his church? You see, ultimately the scripture says he places us in the body, that's the Holy Spirit, as he sees fit.

So it's not our choice, it's his choice. What if he's called you to be a counselor in the church? But you look at that position and you say, no, that's not fulfilling. Certainly God must have something much bigger than that for me.

I remember a man calling me once to the church where I pastored in Canada and he said, Pastor, I don't know how to explain it, but I just have this feeling that God's got something great for me. I said, wonderful. I said, our janitor just quit and we need another janitor.

And the hesitation on the other end of the line is like I had just thrown cold water in his spiritual face. And he said, well, that's not quite what I had in mind. Then we hung up the phone and he called me back a little while later and I said, listen, the Bible says that anyone who will be great among you will be your servant.

I said, your vision of greatness and God's perspective are completely the opposite. If you want to be great, find yourself the least place in the house of God. Find where God would have you be and you do that with all of your heart.

Learn to be content. Paul could say that. Demas couldn't say it.

Paul could say it at the end of his life. I have learned to be content. Whatever situation I find myself in, I am content there.

If I have all things, if I have nothing. If I'm obese, if I'm abound. If I have all kinds of wealth, if I have no wealth.

I have learned. God has led me and I have learned, Paul said, it's a genuine thing in my heart now. I have learned that the greatest place that I could ever find myself in is in the will of God.

Even if it's in the door of a tent in the wilderness, if it's in the will of God, that's where I want to be. Demas, though, has forsaken me. His ways are not these ways.

He doesn't want the way of God. He wants the way of his own heart. We ask ourselves, why? Why is it so strict? Well, I believe that Paul answers it in Romans chapter 14, verse 23.

He basically says, whatsoever is not of faith is sin. It's as simple as that. Once we entered the kingdom of God, we became children of God.

We entered into a life of faith. It's a life of trusting. How many times have I encountered people who say, oh, pastor, I don't know what to do.

I don't know what God would have me to do. Well, then don't do anything. Don't do anything.

The worst thing you could do is start to do something you shouldn't be doing and get attached to it. Seek him. We do know what we're to do.

Seek him first and his kingdom. Seek him with all your heart, your soul, your mind and your strength. That's what we know to do.

Seek him. And out of that seeking will come your place in the body. God knows where you are.

You're not hidden from God. You'll get a phone call. Somebody will walk up to you and say, would you pray about this? Would you consider doing this? You don't have to worry about what to do.

God will bring it your way. He'll put a burden on your heart that is not a result of something that is a struggle, a discontentment within your own life. He'll put a burden that is easy.

The Bible said it's peaceable. It's easy to be entreated. It's got the fruit of God on it.

It may not even seem like the most desirable path, but there's a peace to it. There's a peace about it. That's what I always pray when people come to me and say, I don't know if this is the will of God or not.

I said, now pray for the sign of peace. His ways are the ways of peace. If the water is troubled, if you're stirred up inside and always discontent, you are moving in the wrong direction.

If you are moving in the ways of God, there is peace. When I first came to New York City about, oh, it's 1994 now. And I remember when I first came.

You see, my only impression, you have to understand that even though I was a police officer for 12 years, I did live in a small rural community. I had no perception of what New York City is about except for the movie, *The Cross and the Switchblade*, which doesn't really give you a wholly balanced, as it is, perspective, maybe of some parts of the city back then. But I had that perspective, as many people do coming to New York, that it's just a pile of roving gangs running around shooting and killing each other.

And just a dangerous city, a dangerous place. Now, it's not really like that. I mean, it's a wonderful city.

I love New York City. People are fascinating. It's an incredible city.

There's never a shortage of people to talk to you or you can talk to on the streets. Sometimes they know you're there. Sometimes they don't see you.

And I remember before even meeting Pastor David, I was standing in an apartment where I was staying, looking out the window. And what I saw at that particular time was not very attractive. And I remember the Holy Spirit just coming on me.

I know his presence. And he said, I want you to come here. And I remember thinking, oh, God.

Listen, my kids are in a Christian school. I didn't understand. I didn't know what the schools were like here.

This is going to be a very hard transition for them. I've not even met Pastor David. I'm already arguing with the Holy Spirit.

And I remember the one factor, though, was the peace. The peace. It's funny that the place of peace became troubled and the place of trouble became peace.

It's an amazing thing when you're walking in the will of God. He takes us where we don't understand what he's doing. He takes us to places we can't go and calls us to do things we can't do and to be what we can't be.

But, beloved, it's all about him. It's not about us. It's about walking and fulfilling the will that he has for each one of our lives.

You see, Paul said God is faithful. And with the temptation, I'm preaching the temptation is the temptation to never be satisfied. Or the temptation to allow the discontent to rise up in your heart once again.

That discontent says, God, I should be someone else other than what I am. I should be somewhere else other than where I am. I should have something else to do it with other than what you've given me.

And that's exactly what they were doing in the doors of their tent. Whining in their homes. I wonder how many of our prayers are whining prayers.

Oh, God, just get me out of this job. Lord, I'm called to preach and they're making me an usher. You know I'm called to preach and I know I'm called to preach.

I saw the thousands one day. I saw them. I saw them tear-filled bases and I'm an usher.

Well, that's exactly what they were doing. You've got me on this path I don't understand and my family's with me. And every day all I have is this manna.

God, I get so tired of the manna. All I've got every day is this. Think it through.

That's exactly what they were doing. Psalm 107. You see, God is faithful.

And He will make a way to escape. Psalm 107, verse 4. It says, They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way. They found no city to dwell in.

Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them. Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble and He delivered them out of all their distresses. And He led them forth by the right way that they might go to a city of habitation.

You see, He will never let you be satisfied until you are in right relationship with Him. If you are a child of God, this is the faithfulness of God. He will never let you be satisfied.

You will wander in the wilderness. You will be in a solitary way. It means you're all alone.

You will have a sense of loneliness and a sense of, God, where are you? Where are you? I once knew you. I once sang your praises. I once knew your power.

I had a testimony of your faithfulness. Where are you? Where are you, God? Why have you moved away? You see, the reality is God hasn't gone anywhere. It's you and I that have moved away from Him.

And they found no city to dwell in. And you know, that's the faithfulness of God because He loves us so much. God says, I will not let you find a place where you're satisfied.

If you are my child, He said, I'm going to... I'll give you your requests, all right, but I'm going to send a leanness into your soul. You will never be satisfied until you cry out to me again. And He led them forth by the right way that they might go to a city of habitation.

Now, the right way means a way that is in agreement with and pleasing to God. Incredible. In the Old Testament, go ahead in your Bible with me to the book of Haggai.

Can't find it? It's right after Zephaniah. Haggai. I don't know how to pronounce that, but it sounds good to me.

Haggai. The children of Israel are coming back out of bondage. They've come back out of Babylon.

They've come back out of captivity because they did the same thing. Another generation did the same thing that Moses' generation did. They forgot His ways and didn't wait for His counsel.

They began to even worship Him the way they thought was proper. They began to interject the ways of man, human ingenuity, human effort into the worship and the work of God. And God says, I don't want to do this, but I have to scatter this because this has nothing to do with me and it will only lead my people astray.

And the people came back out of captivity. They returned, but opposition, they began to rebuild again the temple. But opposition and self-centered thinking brought them to a place where all they laid was the foundation.

Then every man seemed to just simply go his way and begin to do his own thing. And God raised up prophets and Haggai was one of them. In chapter 1, the Lord said, Now therefore, in verse 5, Now therefore, saith the Lord of hosts, consider your ways.

You have so much and you bring in little. You eat, but you have not enough. You drink and are not filled.

You clothe you, but there is none warm. And he that earns wages, earns wages to put into a bag with holes. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, consider your ways.

God says basically the same thing. I will not let you live in a place where you are apart from my will for your life. There is nothing enduring there.

There is nothing that will bring satisfaction to your life. And so I will not let it prosper. Go up to the mountain and bring wood.

I liken that to the New Testament church where the call of Christ is to his own people saying, Go back to Calvary again and learn a little bit about what the cross of Jesus Christ is all about. Come again to an understanding about the fact that Jesus said we are to deny ourselves and to take up our cross daily and follow him. Now taking up the cross is not some physical expression of holiness.

Taking up the cross is simply yielding to the will of God. Father, I commit my life, I commit my spirit into your hands. I commit my home, my future, whatever I become.

Whether people think it is wonderful or whether they wag their heads and laugh. In spite of what it is, God, I commit my spirit into your hands. And the scripture says, Go back to the mountain and get some wood.

And I believe that is a good call to many people today. It is time. If you are living in a place where you are not satisfied, especially as a Christian, obviously as an unbeliever, yes.

But as a Christian, if you are not satisfied, it is time to get back to the mountain. It is time to get back to that place of saying, Jesus, whatever your will is for my life, that is what I want. Not what I want, but what you want.

Remember the prayer of Christ in Gethsemane. Not my will, but thy will. Not what I think I should be, but what you have called me to be.

I am tired of this empty place. I am tired of this wilderness. I am tired of working and never being satisfied with my labor.

I am tired of sewing and bringing in little. I am tired of drinking and never having my thirst satisfied. I am tired of putting on clothes and never being warm.

I am tired of earning wages and putting it in a bag with holes. I am tired of it, God. Isn't this life supposed to be satisfying? Didn't you say, those that come to me, you will never hunger again, you will never thirst.

But I thirst. And that is the honest cry of many people in this house today. Many honest Christians can say, God, why am I so thirsty? Why am I so hungry? God says, I want you to consider your ways.

I want you to consider what you are building. Is it my kingdom or yours? Is it my house or yours? Is it my way you are following or your way? Which one is it? And Haggai says, go back to the mountain and get some wood. And build this house.

And God says, I will take pleasure in it. And I will be glorified, saith the Lord. Haggai says, you look for much and it came to little.

And when you brought it home, God says, I blew it away. Why? Because my house is waste. And you run every man to his own house.

God says, you are my chosen people. And my purposes are left to a secondary thing in your life. Oh, yeah, you come to the foundation and worship once a week.

But then you all leave the city. This is to be a place where I am to be glorified. I am to be glorified in the people who are yielded to me.

They are abandoned to me. A people that I give them rubble and say, make a majestic temple. And it happens.

It happens because they believe me. It happens simply because they reach out and begin to do what I have called them to do. Therefore, he says in verse 10, the heaven has stayed from dew and the earth has stayed from her fruit.

And verse 11, he says, and I called for a drought upon the land. And God says, I called for it because I love you. I called for a drought on the place where you are living.

God says, I called for it. It's not the devil after you. God says, it's me.

I called for the drought. I stopped the rain. I shut heaven.

Not because I'm angry with you. Because I love you. Because I'm after you.

I see something. I have destined something for your life. And what you are building will never accomplish it.

Verse 13, he says, then spake Haggai the Lord's messenger and the Lord's message unto the people, saying, I am with you, says the Lord. You've got to know that about God. God says to his people continuously, I'm with you, I'm with you, I'm with you.

I'm not against you. I'm with you. And the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, the spirit of Joshua, the high priest and the spirit of all the remnant of the people.

And they came and did work in the house of the Lord of hosts, their God. The spirit, the Lord stirred up their spirit. When you look in the original text, it has the idea of opening their eyes or being woken up or lifted up.

It's like a man coming into a room where a friend has laid asleep for a long, long time and has not been aware of it and shakes him and wakes him up and then gathers him in his arms and carries him out of that place. That's the very context. The Lord, it says, stirred up the spirit.

And you can see Joshua who's lost heart and Zerubbabel who's lost hope and all the other people who've gone to build their own houses. And it's so dry there. It's so wearying.

And all of a sudden they're saying, God, I see it. You sent this leanness to bring me back to yourself and to your will for my life. Now, in 2nd Timothy, chapter one, I'm coming to the end now.

2nd Timothy, chapter one, the apostle Paul says to young Timothy. Now, this is near the end of Paul's life. It's not quite, but it's getting close to the end of his life now.

In 2nd Timothy, chapter one, verse six, Paul says these words to Timothy. Wherefore, he said, I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. Paul says, Timothy, when I prayed for you and the Holy Ghost came into your life, there was a power of God that was deposited in you.

Paul says, Timothy, it was put in you for a purpose. It was not to live your life for yourself. Timothy, he's saying, fan into flames this grace of God.

For God's not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and love and of a sound mind. Be not thou, therefore, ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me as prisoner. But be a partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God.

Paul says, who has saved us and called us with the holy calling, not according to our works. Timothy, he's not called us according to anything we can do. And we have nothing to give him.

We have no plans that suit him. We have no things that we can build with our own hands that will ever allow his glory to come. Timothy, he's not called us according to our works, but according to his own purpose.

That means his counsel, his plan and grace. That means the power to do it, which was given us in Christ before the world began. Paul says, Timothy, you fan the flame by coming back to this understanding.

That God deposited a plan into your life. And not just a plan, but the power to fulfill it. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Last scripture, Psalm 131. How do I come back to life in God? That's got to be the honest question.

There are many here today who say, God, I didn't see my prayer as a problem. But the Holy Spirit is now uncovering something. I often wondered when I studied Revelation about the church of Ephesus.

When he was calling them back to their first love. Now, I know the first love is the understanding that God loved me before I loved him. I know that.

But there's a secondary feature to this love. Come back to your first love, Ephesus. This is a church that was doctrinally correct in testing and trying and proving the false teachers of that day, plus the good ones as well.

They were working. I know your works. I know your labor.

How you were born. You've been patient. But he said, I want you to come back to your first love.

If you don't come back to the first love, you're going to lose your candlestick. And that's the very testimony of Christ. You're going to lose it.

And I believe that they were substituting the plan of God for their own works. And it's the tendency of all of humanity to do that. You are working.

But I can see Christ looking to the church of Ephesus and saying, half of you are working in the wrong place. I didn't call you there. And others are enamored with their knowledge.

You can prove those that are false. And it's sown something in you where you're not satisfied anymore with where you are because you feel you have this superior knowledge. And because of this superior knowledge, you no longer want just to serve me in the capacity that I've given you.

As a servant in my house, you want to be exalted. James, the apostle, said, you ask and receive not because you ask amiss that you may consume it upon your lusts. Folks, that doesn't just apply to liquor and tobacco and cars and houses.

That applies to ministry. There are many, many people who are unbroken. And they stand in the doors of their tent and say, oh God, make me this.

Or oh God, make me that. And God says, I can't do it for you because you're full of yourself. And you will only consume it on your lusts.

You see what happens to preachers and evangelists that make the public eye and who are unbroken? They wallow in the glorying of man. They wallow in the praise of man. They become idiots in the name of

Christ.

And they consume God's people on their own lusts. God will never use you until you genuinely have no ambition. But to know Him.

And to walk with Him. And say, God, you want to put a broom in my hands in your name? Then God put it in my hands and I'll do it with all my heart. David, the psalmist in Psalm 131.

Now, this psalm, according at least to the Reiss chronological Bible, is written near the end of his life. And after he has made the mistake of numbering Israel. It's a terrible mistake because he was moving away from the plan and trust in God.

And moving to trusting in the strength and numbers as it is of the soldiers that Israel had. And if that would have been allowed to nurture in his heart, he would have brought Israel into terrible destruction. It would have totally taken him away from the simple childlike trust that brought such great victory through his life.

And into the camp of God's people as it is. You know, God judged it severely. 70,000 died because of the sin of David.

And David writes this psalm about this time. And he says, Lord, my heart is not haughty. And nor mine eyes lofty.

And neither do I exercise myself in great matters and things too high for me. David is saying this. I have learned my lesson, God.

I've learned. We're true powers. We're true graces.

It's in being absolutely and entirely satisfied where you placed me. As we say in a marriage vow, in sickness and in health. For richer, for poorer, for better, for worse.

I'm betrothed to you, Jesus. And I am satisfied for you to put me where you want me to be. And to call me to do what you've asked me to do.

Even if it's in the jail cell writing letters to friends at the end of my life. I'm content to be there because that's what you've called me to do. And God, I'm not looking anywhere else but simple trust and obedience.

That was the earmark of David's life that brought the glory of God into Israel. Surely, he said, verse 2, I have behaved and quieted myself as a child that is weaned of his mother. My soul, he said, is as a weaned child.

He says, I know that something I naturally cherish and which once seemed to be the source of my life has been taken away. That's what a weaned child is like. I thought I needed this nourishment.

I thought this would last forever. But God, you've taken something away from me for a purpose. And there are reasons that yet I don't understand.

And I shall not in pride try to figure out every step of my life. I shall not debate the one who created me. For he alone knows why I was made.

David says, I will rest in God's arms like a weaned child. No longer fussing and never satisfied. No longer like the children of Israel in their tent doors.

Six hundred thousand early into their journey, fussing. And Moses said, they're like babies that have to be carried into the promised land. David says, I will no longer be like a nursing child that is always fussing and always looking, never satisfied.

But God, if you withhold something from me, I know there's a reason. If you leave me in a certain place, I know there's a reason for that. I will rest in God's arms and I will trust that whatever he gives me is the best for my life.

Because I don't see the whole plan. A weaned child doesn't understand that he or she needs to be weaned to grow. In their own little world, they've been deprived of something that has brought them great comfort and they can't understand it.

But after the initial flagging, as it is, the child learns to rest in its mother's arms. And David said, God, that's exactly what I have become like. Then he makes an incredible statement, the last verse.

He said, let Israel hope in the Lord. Israel, he said, God, let this be your hope and your trust from this time forward and forever. No more fussing.

No more fighting. No more whining. No more longing.

Jesus, I will trust you. Whatever days are left of my life, my God, I will trust you. I will trust you wherever you place me, whatever you ask me to do, whatever you make me.

If you give me influence, if you give me no influence, I will trust you. My glory will be in you. I will rest in your arms.

I will trust that you are carrying me to places. You are taking me places. You are going to do things in my life that I don't understand.

But God, I will trust you all the days of my life. Hallelujah. Hallelujah, hallelujah.

If God has put a leanness in your soul, he is calling you back to himself again. He's calling you. I want to encourage you with all my heart to get back to that place again where you knew him.

Get back to that place where you're content in him without having to add some other thing. Get back to the place where you came to the Lord and said, God, I don't care what you do with my life. I'm saved.

God, I remember the days when I first came to Christ. I said, I'll preach to the trees if no one else will listen. I used to go jogging on the country roads and just glorify him and shout out his name.

There was nobody around there. It didn't matter. And if he takes it and multiplies it, wonderful.

But it's really up to him. It's not up to us. I will not, David said, allow myself to get involved in thinking that is too high for me.

David said, I will not number Israel. I will trust in God. Hallelujah.

Time to get back, folks. Time to get back. For many, many Christians, it's time to get back.

I'd like to open this altar. Education addicts, you can go between the screens. In this sanctuary, you can come down the aisle.

You can go to either exit in the balcony. You can come down the main aisle. I want you to meet me here.

You've been brought through a leanness in your soul. And you say, I didn't even know it was a problem. I've been praying prayers that are problematic and I didn't even know it.

I've been whining instead of trusting. God, forgive me. Make your way to the altar, please.

And we will pray together. I came back to the last place I'd known him to be. Every promise he'd once spoken had seemed only for me.

I don't know just how it happened. But in the midst of all my pain, softly, sweetly, I heard Jesus calling. Let's all stand.

My name. Let's sing that verse again. I came back to the last place I'd known him.

It's a good place to be. Where every promise he'd once spoken had seemed only for me. I don't know just how it happened.

But in the midst of all my pain, softly, sweetly, I heard Jesus calling. My name. Calling my name.

Calling my name. Never I've heard it with such sweet refrain. Through the sea of darkness vanishes, and I'll never be the same.

Since the morning I heard Jesus calling my name. Touch me not till I'm ascended to the Father's heaven. Go and tell all others fearful they know me to be.

Be not faithless by believing he's coming again. Yes, I know because I've heard him calling my name. He's calling my name.

Calling my name. Never I've heard it with such sweet refrain. Through the sea of darkness vanishes, and I'll never be the same.

Since the morning I heard Jesus calling my name. I came back to the last place I'd known him to be. Every promise he'd once spoken seemed only for me.

I don't know just how it happened. But in the midst of all my pain, softly, sweetly, I heard Jesus calling my name. Can you hear it now? He's calling my name.

Calling my name. Never I've heard it with such sweet refrain. Through the sea of darkness vanishes, and I'll never be the same.

Since the morning I heard Jesus calling my name. He's calling my name. Calling my name.

Never I've heard it with such sweet refrain. Through the sea of darkness vanishes, and I'll never be the same. Since the morning I heard Jesus calling my name.

Now listen carefully. Firstly, this morning, for those that are here, and you can say, Pastor, you're talking right down the alleyway of my life. I'm empty, dry, I'm hurting.

I work and I'm never satisfied. But it's because I don't know Jesus Christ as my Savior. I have never given him my life.

I've never made him my Lord. But today I want to confess that I'm a sinner and I need a Savior. And I want a life that is greater than the one that I've ever known.

I want to know that I'm free from my sin, and I want to know I'm accepted with God. If that's your heart's cry today, I'm going to lead you in a simple prayer. If you really believe it in your heart, the Bible says that you will be saved.

Saved, absolutely saved from the emptiness of having an eternity without God and the emptiness of trying to live a life without God at the center of it. If that's you today, would you join with me and raise up your hand, nice and high, right now. All over the sanctuary.

Go ahead. Up in the balcony. Don't be ashamed.

You may not be at the top. Raise it up high. Hold it up to God.

Let him see it. Hallelujah. We have dozens and dozens.

Thank you, Jesus. Education addicts as well, I don't see your hand, but God sees your hand right now. I'm going to lead you in a prayer.

In the moment we're done praying, the greatest transaction ever in your life will have taken place. The Bible says there's an angel with a pen in heaven and he's writing your name in a book called the Lamb's Book of Life. Those that have trusted in Jesus Christ and his atoning death on Calvary 2,000 years ago for your salvation, this is a marvelous day for you.

Hallelujah. You have a reason to shout after you pray this prayer. Let's pray all together now.

Lord Jesus, I am a sinner. Jesus, I thank you that you came to the earth. God became a man.

And you took my place and paid the price for all the wrong things that I have done. Thank you for loving me enough to die for me. Jesus, this day I'm saying with my lips and I'm believing in my heart that you paid the price for my sin, that you died, you rose again on the third day as living proof that my trust in you is not in vain.

I believe that as you rose from the dead, you will also take me out of death and into life, everlasting life and an abundant life here on this earth. I thank you. You will teach me how to walk with you and how to trust you.

I believe this very moment you are coming into my life as my Lord and my Savior. This fulfills the desire of my heart and the greatest desire that's in your heart. Thank you for receiving me.

I believe this very moment as these words are leaving my lips, you are writing down my name in a book in heaven of those that are saved by the blood of Jesus Christ. I believe from this moment forward I am saved. I am saved.

I am saved. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

Mighty God, thank you. Those that have prayed that, please, New Believers class, every Friday night, 7 o'clock, get there. There's lots of people there, probably 50, 60, 70 people there.

There's lots of people there that are brand new Christians. You won't be all alone there. So get out there and be part of that.

Now, for the rest that are here, I hope that you're tired of praying whiny prayers in the door of your tent. And we're going to ask God to forgive us for that. Pray with me now.

Lord Jesus, forgive me for not being content. Forgive me for losing the understanding that the greatest in your kingdom becomes the servant to all. Forgive me for wanting my will and wanting my way.

Forgive me, Lord. Now, teach me and lead me back into a place where I can trust you again. I thank you, Lord, that you've not allowed me to prosper in everything that I've tried to do that you've not given to me.

Thank you for being faithful to me and giving me a way to escape the desires of my own heart. I thank you for it. I praise you for it.

I believe that today you've set me free from something I didn't even know had become a problem. Thank you for your faithfulness. Carry me and keep me in the center of your will.

In Jesus' name, amen. This is the conclusion of the message.

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