

Loving God and Loving People

by Gary Wilkerson

The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding the Father's love and how it can lead to freedom from fear and a deeper personal relationship with God.

Duration: 52:45

Scripture: Psalm 139:17, Jeremiah 29:11, Matthew 22:37-39, John 15:15, Acts 10:38, Romans 5:5, Ephesians 3:17-19, 2 Timothy 1:7, 1 John 3:1, 1 John 4:18

Topics: "Love", "God's Love", "Overcoming Fear"

Description

Gary Wilkerson emphasizes the profound love of God for each individual, encouraging believers to embrace this love as a means to overcome fear and to freely love others. He shares personal experiences of how understanding God's love has transformed his approach to ministry and relationships, moving from a fear-based mindset to one rooted in love and acceptance. Wilkerson highlights that the essence of the New Covenant is God's love, which empowers believers to live authentically and share that love with others, ultimately fostering a community of grace and compassion.

Transcript

Hi, my name is Gary and I'm a recovering Pharisee. And you're all supposed to say hello, Gary. That's the... Obviously I have not been at any AA meetings, have you? It's a blast to be with you.

This is a joyful place. The Spirit of the Lord is here. People are getting along with one another.

Isn't that a great place to be? It's probably a real different experience than your church. I'm teasing. I'm teasing you.

But it is great. And what a wonderful message last night. Just so powerful and provoking to our hearts the reality of God's grace and His love.

And then here this morning, I was telling Pastor Carter, I'll just get up and say hi for a few minutes. There's so much already to chew on and to devour in our own hearts and give thanks for God for what He's been saying to us. It's great to be here at Summit.

This is a wonderful place. I've been here many, many times and it just keeps getting better and better. It's like the wine of the Holy Spirit just keeps getting better and better.

The Spirit of God just increases here more and more. And the students that are coming out of here, I've worked with many of them in different ministries around the world and even at my own home church. God has done some incredible things for the students here.

We just love them. We love being here with you. Let me pray and then let's just go into what God would have me to say to us here this morning in this place.

Father, I just, ah, man, it's just so good to be with you. You're, you're, you're, we sang this morning and we get to claim this incredible thing. I am a friend of God.

Lord, as I travel around the world, you let me experience people that strive to even say that they could be accepted by God or strive to earn God's favor from many religions around the world, even sometimes Christians. But I thank you that you've exposed to us your love and through that love you said to us, we are friends of God. Father, I bring before you the words that you put on my heart.

Let them be pleasing most of all to you. Lord, I didn't come here to impress anybody. I didn't come here to try to get an applause of man.

I thank you for revealing that, that idol in my own heart in the past of, of looking to impress people. Lord, I would rather, I would rather leave this pulpit utterly having failed in what I thought I should say than to, than to try to appease people or please people and having in done so not blessed your heart, Father. So I'm here to bless your heart, just to be a servant of yours, to say what you want to say, to say it in the way you want to say it, to, to, to accomplish your purposes in this place, to, to, to let you shine, to, to hide behind the cross and let Jesus be exalted in this place.

Thank you. Thank you for, for you are worthy. For you alone are worthy, God.

There, there's, there's no, no one worthy. Lord, even when we hear the greatest sermons in the world, the man or woman preaching that is not worthy to be praised or worshiped, but you are, Jesus. You are praise worthy.

And we give thanks for that in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

First Timothy, excuse me, Second Timothy chapter one, verse seven. Bible says, For he has not given us a spirit of fear. One translation says he hasn't given us a spirit of fear or timidity, but he's given us love, power, and a sound mind.

Or another one says, or a spirit of self-discipline. He's not giving you a spirit of fear, but he's giving you a spirit of love. And he's giving you a spirit of power.

And he's giving you a spirit that has a sound mind. I believe the first thing that God wants me to tell you here today is, is, is the simplest thing you'll ever hear. And I'm becoming, the older I get, you think the more complex or more theological or more doctrinal or more intense you get in discerning different aspects of Scripture.

But I find myself, as I get older, I'm getting more simple. And I just like the simple things of the gospel. And I believe just simply, this is gonna be really simple.

I think God sent me here to say that the Father God loves you. Amen. Alrighty.

Thank you for coming. That's enough. That is, that's enough.

I mean, I could preach another hour, but I won't say anything better than that. We may not discern it, we may not grasp it, we may not drink it in, but the Father God loves you. He loves you.

He's given you this spirit that he's talking about. Jesus said, it's good that I go away, because if I go away, what a weird thing for him to say and what a weird thing for us to understand. It's good that Jesus goes away, this man who was the most perfect man ever, the only perfect man ever to walk on the face of the earth, could do signs and wonders and miracles and astound crowds and change nations.

And it's good that he goes away. Why? Because he's gonna send the Holy Spirit. And he says, and that Spirit's gonna come and he's gonna be a comforter.

Well, that's a good word, but why would he need to send a comforter? Well, because he knows we're gonna be uncomfortable. He wouldn't need to send a comforter if he didn't think we're gonna be a little bit uncomfortable. And oftentimes, I think the greatest thing that causes discomfort is that we don't know that we're loved by the Father, that your Abba Father thinks of you and he delights in you.

Psalms 137, I think it's verse 17, says, how precious are the thoughts you have for me. Another translation says, how precious are the thoughts you concern yourself with me about. In other words, God, that blows me away.

God thinks about me? I mean, like when Nick was talking earlier about the little dance he was doing, I won't try to do that. That's an Irish jig there. I won't even attempt.

But trying to get God's attention. Hey, God, I'm here. Would you pay attention to me? But here's what God's saying.

No, you don't need to strive to get me to pay attention. I'm already thinking about you. And the psalmist goes on to say, all these thoughts that God has concerning you, they're too numerous to count.

That's a lot of thoughts that God has about you. From the previous verse, it says that in your mother's womb, you're being formed and created by God, and he's thinking about you, your plans, your future, your relationships, your abilities, your gifts, your callings, the heart of the matter. He's putting all that into us and he's thinking these thoughts about us.

And then he goes on to Psalm 139, 18, goes on to say that if we were to count all the thoughts that God has about us and how precious they were, they would be more numerous than the sands of the seas. That is one heck of a lot of thoughts that God has about you. And I started thinking the other day, what if we just knew like five of them? Like five grains of sand we could pick up and go, here's one thought God has about you.

He thinks you're wonderful. No, no, stop saying like that. No, he needs to, we didn't know he's, God thinks we're miserable, lousy, no good, ne'er do well sinners.

And that's his thought about us. But by grace, he'll come and think kind of nice thoughts about us. Like we'll hide behind Jesus.

I've never gotten a lot of thrill out of that. I was taught that from childhood that when we stand before God, God's not gonna see us. He's gonna see Jesus and say, okay, because I see Jesus, you're acceptable.

And Jesus is gonna be kind of like standing up there. You know, here's God and here's Jesus. Shh, don't stand by him.

I don't want him to see you. Stop, stay. It's like, and you know, you peek out behind Jesus a little bit and he pushes your head back.

And God doesn't see us, he sees Jesus. It's like, I don't, I wouldn't mind him seeing me. I'd like to see him.

I wouldn't mind a hug. You know, I wouldn't mind a little face to face. I think that's what we get to be in heaven.

We see him face to face. And so Jesus not only covers me by his blood and cleanses me and calls me his friend and puts his heart within me, but he makes me acceptable to God. And so God, when he thinks of me now, he, you know, sometimes he's thinking in terms of correction and sometimes he's thinking in terms of rebuke and sometimes there's challenges in my life that he has to straighten me out on.

But his thoughts for me, how precious. The psalmist said they're precious because they're good thoughts. If the thoughts were one more move like that and I'm striking you dead, I don't think the psalmist would say how precious are his thoughts of me.

I think he'd say how dangerous are his thoughts of me. No, but they're precious. And if you could just know one of them, wouldn't that be great? That he loves you.

That's a beautiful grain of sand. That he's called you. That you're precious in his sight.

That you're dear to him. That he loves your company. That he has plans for your life.

That he's called you to great and marvelous things. That you're his friend. He likes to walk alongside of you.

He has a special purpose in your life. I know the plans I have for you are plans for good. These are grains of sand that he's thinking.

And could you imagine just if, and most of us know five or 10 or 20 in our lifetime and yet he says that they're more multiple than the sand of all the seas. That all the grains of sand in the world couldn't contain, we could count all those up and still not have overcounted the amount of grains of sand that God has for you. The Father's love.

It's when we understand the Father's love for us, it takes the new covenant that we're teaching here and moves it from the head to the heart. That 18 inch journey that for some of us is the hardest journey of all. Is that we understand it now not just by the theological terms that it gives to us.

And I'm that kind of guy. I mean I read. I read about two books a week.

I love studying. I love, and when I started trying to get more understanding of the new covenant, I got New Covenant Unveiled by, I can't remember his name. He's an author.

I got that New Covenant Unveiled. I got A.W. Tozer's The Two Covenants. And I inherited my dad's library and it's got John Owen and Wesley and all these guys.

It's got all this stuff about New Covenant, William Blake, all these great writers from the Puritan times. And I have all these books on my desk and they're like, and I'm just, and I'm thinking of, you know, like Nick was saying today, like the Abrahamic covenant and the Noahic covenant and the Davidic covenant and the Arnold Schwarzenegger covenant. And it's just like, wow.

What is all this stuff? You know, and I just want the Jesatic covenant. You know, the Jesus covenant. And Jesus makes it so simple.

I love you is the crux of the New Covenant, that he has this great love for you. And as I had all these books and trying to study all this stuff around there, one day in my study, the Lord just said, do you want me to reveal a little bit more of the New Covenant? He said, absolutely. And all of a sudden I heard this song.

■ Jesus loves me, this I know ■ ■ For the Bible tells me so ■ ■ Little ones to him belong ■ ■ We are weak, but he is strong ■ Then yes, and then that word yes hit me. Soon as I can say yes to that song, I'm beginning to understand the New Covenant. Soon as I can say yes, he really does.

Yes, this is not just my brain. Yes, this is my heart that says he absolutely loves me. That the New Covenant is not just a doctrine or a theology.

It's the Son of God poured out his love on the cross. It was God the Father who said he loves us so much that he gave his only Son. It's that benevolent heart of the Father.

The Father, if you knew the Father's love, it would change everything. It would be the key to that gift that he says in Timothy that he cast out all fear. We live in fear because we don't know the Father's love for us.

We do, and so it's a fear. Did I please him? Did I say that right? Did I say that wrong? Did I impress people? Did I preach well? Did my church think I'm doing okay? Do I feel like I'm doing okay? It's all about our own self-judgment, and it's not about God's judgment of us, using the word judgment, and maybe in a different way than some of us might understand. God looks at us through the love of Jesus Christ, through his love for us, and says, I just love you, you're my children.

One more time, the Father loves you. He really does. He just, he loves you.

His heart is for you. He's not against you. He's proud of you.

He's on your side. He's not there with a stick to beat you, try to get you to behave better, although yes, he does long for a holy walk with God too, but that love draws me into a holy walk with God without fear. See, with the perfect love, cast out all fear, so it's not until I know that I'm loved by my Father that the fear can be cast out, and if the fear's not cast out, there's never going to be a response to and a walking in and a joy over the new covenant grace of Jesus Christ.

It just won't be there because fear will be ruling you, and you can't have fear in your heart and the grace of God and the new covenant in your heart working simultaneously. The one will push out the other. Perfect love casts out all fear.

The new covenant is in its essence is Father's love for you, Jesus's love for you, and that moves out fear from your heart, and when fear is moved out from your heart and you know that the Father loves you, you're set free. You're really free, and I'm not talking about free from drug addiction. Yeah, that'll set you

free immediately.

Jesus's love can set free an addict. He can set free an adultery. He can set free anybody, but even for Christians in the church who are not free, they can be set free by understanding how much the Father God loves them, and then that freedom is amazing.

It will change your ministry because now you're not trying to control things. Fear always is controlling. I'm trying to control my elders.

I'm trying to control what happens in the pulpit, trying to control what happens in the altar. You're free to move in the Holy Spirit because now you don't have to control the Holy Spirit because a lot of even us who come from the Pentecostal tradition, we say, hey, we believe in the Holy Spirit, and we want the Holy Spirit here. This is as long as he behaves himself.

Just sit over there in that section. Be nice. Don't get out of order.

Like we're commanding the Holy Spirit, be decent and in order. Hey, I wrote that. I know decency and order.

The Holy Spirit knows decency and order, and it's not the same thing we know. Sometimes when out of our fear, we're trying to control things, and so it is so important that even this next day or two that you're here together, that you would just pray, God, would you once again just show me that Father's love so that I don't have to live in fear anymore. I don't have to live in fear of what people think of me.

I don't have to live in fear of the church growth attendance. I don't have to live in fear of anything. The mortgage on our church building isn't going to get paid for our ministry.

We don't have to fear any of that. You have an Abba Father who's good, and if he's called you into the ministry, he's going to give you all the grace you need, all the power you need, all the authority you need, all the financial blessings that you need, all the buildings that you need. He'll give you everything according to his riches and glory because he loves you.

Jesus just really loves you. And once you get that, then you can move into a ministry that's not fear-based, but that is love-based. Being loved by God can create in us an opportunity and an environment around us that we're beginning to operate now in that kind of freedom that we have from God, a freedom to love other people.

And the more and more, that's really what I want out of life. I just want to be loved by God, and I want to really love God with all my heart, and I really want to love people. And that's a battle for me.

I don't know if it's for you. It's like, I love ministry, I love preaching. There's people that I'm not quite so sure about.

But God has, I say that, but at the same time, I'm also saying, God has put, supernaturally, a baptism of love in my heart. More and more, I find myself in the waters that the Old Testament talks about. At first, it's ankle deep, and then knee deep, and then up to waist, and then before long, you're being carried away by these waters.

I find that's what the Holy Spirit's doing in my life. I think you're probably experiencing that too. The more you understand that the Father loves you, the more you're free, and the more you're free, you can treat

people with love, rather than trying to make sure you're saying something right to them, or the conversation's going away, where you look like you're smart, or at least you're intelligent.

That's why I've had, for many years, a hard time remembering people's names. Because when I walk up to somebody I've not met before, I'm not thinking about them, I'm thinking about what's the first thing I'm gonna say, so I can make sure I sound smart. Or at least don't go like, duh, duh, my name is Gary.

And so, we're not other-centered because of the fear. When the Bible says, he's not giving us that spirit of fear, if we walk in that spirit of fear, we're walking into a room, and we're saying, here I am, what am I, how am I perceived, what are people gonna think of me? But when the Spirit of God takes away that spirit of fear, you walk in a room, and you go, ah, there you are. You see the dynamic difference in that? That's your whole life change there.

Your whole life changes from, here I am, what do you think of me? What do I need to do? Is everything okay? I'm a little bit afraid about this experience that I'm having. It moves away from that totally, into the, ah, there you are. I've been looking for you, I wanted to talk to you, I wanted to pray for you, I wanted to hear your heart, I wanted to bless you, I wanted to give you this gift.

Just, doesn't it change things? It really changes things. And so more and more we get from ankle deep up to waist deep, up to the fullness of this river, of the living water of God, that calls us to give away our life to other people. So, last few months, I've been transitioning to my wife, and I didn't introduce my wife, Kelly.

Kelly, would you mind standing? This is my wife, Kelly. Hi, Kelly, stand up. We've been married, we've been married 39 years almost.

No, yeah, 39 years. Isn't that great? And she is amazing. She's really special.

You're cool, you're wonderful, you're great to be around, you're my best friend, you're wonderful company. I really love you, Kelly. You're a pleasure.

Sorry. I've never done that in a sermon before. Wow.

It's just, you know, God gives you a gift like that for 39 years? Man, that's incredible. What was I saying? Thanks a lot. I don't know.

I wasn't listening. Oh, yeah. So, I looked over to Kelly.

So, since January, there's been transition. I've been a pastor my life, you know, 35, almost 40 years of pastoring, and so, this past few months, I've given more of the leadership of our church in Colorado over to one of my associates, and he's taking the lead there. My wife and I are getting to travel around the world now, particularly doing pastor's conferences, and it's been amazing.

So, we were just in a conference in Armand, Jordan, with the joy of having Pastor Carter share there with us just a dynamic message that he's got for pastors in crisis and in need. They're in difficult, these guys are working and operating in such difficult situations. Like one pastor, he's a pastor in Damascus, and he's talking about the bombs that have been going off in the city and just destroying buildings, and him and his church, they go into these buildings and find little kids that maybe their parents have died in this carnage, and they take the little baby out and they adopt them, and here's this guy.

And you know what, not only is he surviving and thriving in this church, growing in the midst of that, but he's also totally blind. And he won't leave. Everybody's telling him, you gotta leave there, you gotta get out of there, it's too dangerous.

I'm not leaving. This is where Jesus called me to be. And so, to be able to minister to people like that, it's just a thrill.

It's wonderful. And while we were at this conference in Jordan, I was staying at the hotel, and I was preparing my notes and writing my sermons out, and then I would wait for the car to come pick us up, and it would take us to the hall where we were meeting, and we'd preach or listen to others preach, these pastors, and we'd have a worship service, and I'd go back and say, oh, Lord, I need another word for tonight, and I'd pray, and then I'd maybe go eat some dinner and get picked back up at the hotel and go back to the conference at night. And after about the second day of the conference, I thought to myself, oh, my goodness, here I am in a country with, like, six million people who are Muslim that most of them have never even heard the name Jesus, let alone had Him explained to them, and as joyful and as called as I am to go to these pastors' conferences, I'm walking by waiters and bellmen and people on the streets, and I had to wear my shirts out because it was so hot there.

I had to go buy a new shirt, and I was in the checkout counter, and I thought, all these people I'm passing by to go talk to pastors about things they've heard 10 times already, if not 100 times, and the Lord just said, your ministry is not in an assembly hall or in a church building. Your ministry is not Sunday morning from 9 to 11. Your ministry is not when you gather with pastors.

Your ministry is to everybody you meet, everywhere you go, no matter what kind of faith background, no matter what kind of religion, you are called, you're calling because I love you and I'm getting fear out of your heart because of that. Now, you go everywhere I tell you to go, and there's no meeting times. There's no start time and then, I'm glad I'm done with that session, or that's okay.

You're never done with ministry. You never start ministry over again. You're not doing ministry.

You are a minister. You are a minister, and so I just kind of went, all right, God, that's got to be you because I'm like a theologian at heart, and I'm a teacher. Those are my gifts, and now you're talking about something about, you know, sharing Jesus with Muslim people, and I went, okay, you know, I'm going to do this, but I really don't know how, and then it got real simple.

It was really amazing just sitting in my hotel, not preparing a sermon anymore, but just thinking about, I'm going to pass by probably 12, 15, 20 people today that don't know Jesus, and I want somehow to be able to just stop and talk to them a little bit about Jesus. If nothing else, just can I pray for you? Can I tell you God loves you? And I said, God, how do I do this? Because it's just not natural to me. A lot of people are naturally evangelists.

You ever been around those people? They're obnoxious. They are, because they just, like I was in an elevator one time with a guy, and we went, we went up, and he was saying, did you know that Jesus died for you, and he came again, and he's risen again, and from the grave, and he's coming again, and unless you repent of your sins, I'm a Christian. We're working together, and I realized, oh, he was talking to other people in the elevator.

He was using me as a conversation piece. That was his witnessing tactic. I thought, these guys are so obnoxious.

I'm just saying, that's not me. That's not the guy I am, but I felt the Lord said, hey, I'm your father, and I love you, and fear is gone, so it's going to be a safe place. It's not going to be an unnatural kind of a forest.

I got a witness with three people. You ever read those life stories of people like, he wouldn't go to bed until he led two people to Christ? I'd be awake a long time. I'd be sleep deprived.

I'd be dead. It just wasn't natural to me, but my father is good, and he just simply said to me, well, let me baptize you afresh in the Holy Spirit. I said, okay.

Do I need to go to a Benny Hinn thing and have them blow on me, and I lay down for an hour, and I can walk up an hour, so I got power now. It hit me. It was imputed to me or whatever, impartation to me.

The Lord just said, no. I said, well, what do you need to do? He said, no, I just did it. I gave you afresh baptism in the Holy Spirit.

I didn't feel it. I didn't say anything in the Scripture about you having to feel it. I said, I give it to you.

It's a gift, a gift of the Holy Spirit. I said, okay. I like that.

I'll receive that, and then I got in the elevator, and I'm walking up to the guy. He was a college guy there, an Arab college guy, and I said, man, I just want you to know Jesus loves you, and he goes, hmm, and then we got off his floor. I said, is that it? He didn't fall down in his face and say, I need God.

I was like, and the Holy Spirit just said, no, that's exactly what I wanted you to do. We went up to Mount, where were we? I want to call it Elbow, but Ebow? Nebo. Not Mount Elbow.

Mount Nebo, where Moses was, and this guy standing next to me, and I said, where are you from? He goes, I'm from France. I go, oh, not a lot of Christians in France. I'm a Christian.

You need to become a Christian. You need to know Jesus, and he's like, okay, and that was kind of it, and then I got on an airplane and went back to, after the conference was over, I went back to flying into Denver and still not fully grasping this thing, and I got into Denver, and as we were landing, I was like, man, that was long. That was three weeks.

We were in Italy and Germany and the Netherlands and Armenia, I'm on Jordan, and man, I'm exhausted. I haven't slept on the plane. I haven't slept the night before very well.

It was an all-night flight, and I'm glad I'm done for a little while, and you know what the Holy Spirit said then, right? Yeah. I just told you three days ago, you're not, there's not a done time to this thing. This is, you will be my, you shall receive power, and when that power comes upon you, you shall be my witness.

Okay, God, this is part of, if I'm going to preach the new covenant, then I want to live the new covenant, and living out of that new covenant, if I understand the new covenant, it affects me. I don't just sit in church every week and hear another sermon about the new covenant and go like, yeah, that's good preaching. I like this preaching on the new covenant.

It affects me. It makes me different. I'm a different person.

I'm freer. I love God more. I understand God's love for me more.

I want to love people more. I want to love my church more. I want to pray for people in need, and so I got off the plane.

The Lord said, no, you're just beginning, and okay, this is getting to be an exciting journey, and so I went back, and it was late night. Went to sleep. Woke up the next morning.

Our refrigerator was empty, so I went to the grocery store, and I was checking out, and I was doing this whole thing like, Holy Spirit, you just baptized me afresh, so I want to, what do I do? Who do I talk to? I got my grocery cart, and people walking by, and I'm going like, grocery cart, and I'm walking by like, are you the one? Should I talk to you about Jesus? You know what I'm saying? This is really kind of silly, but I'm like, I don't need peanut butter, but I'm like, look through another peanut butter. Like, oh, what kind of peanut butter is this? It's like, will somebody stop and get peanut butter too, and we can have a relationship built there. Nobody talks to me at the peanut butter counter, and so I'm checking out, and I'm thinking, okay, it's got to be the lady at the checkout counter.

I'm going to tell her about Jesus, and I'm just like, and then finally, the little girl, she's just a little teenager, probably maybe 20 years old, and she looked kind of a little discouraged and depressed, and she says, sir, can I help you out with my groceries, and I'm like, does this body need help? I mean, I'm totally capable of pushing a grocery cart out. You know, I didn't tell her that, but that's what I'm thinking. You know, I may look weak to you, but I'm strong enough to get groceries out of the grocery store, and I say, no, I'm fine, and I get the cart, and all of a sudden, it hit me, just like the baptism of love is on you, and you just love that little girl, and I just said, hey, actually, could you help me? And she goes, yeah, and so she's pushing the cart out, and as she's pushing the cart, I said, you know, the reason I asked you to help me is just as we were going here, I just, the Lord told me to tell you that, how much God loves you, that Jesus loves you so much, and you can just see her.

She's looking at me like, you know, who are you? And then we got to the car, and she started talking about her mom a little bit and some of the struggles they were having and difficulties, and just, you could see the tears rolling up her eyes. I just put my arm around her and said, let me just pray for you. You know, Jesus, just love on this girl.

Just love her. Just give her mercy. Give her grace.

Show her your heart. And she's just, like, thank you. She was so excited.

I'm going like, wow. This is actually fun. It's actually fun.

It's not, I used to, when I was in a youth group, they'd send us on mission trips. I hated mission trips because you'd have to go, I was, I was, I was in Canada at the Olympics, and they gave us these tracks and said, don't come back until you give all these tracks away. And when you got back, they would give testimonies.

I led so-and-so to Christ, you know, and, and it's like, you know, I had these tracks and I walk out the door and I look and coming down the street is the, no lie, the Hungarian wrestling team. I'm going like, I am not giving those monsters a track because, so, so there's like 20 of them. There's 20 tracks going in the trash.

That's 20, okay. So it's like, I mean, and so, so just, like those, that forced kind of evangelism thing, all right, I'll be honest with you. My dad even did, it was, we were living in Texas at the time and it was kind of, it was before Times Square Church started and it was back to New York and he was going to give away a million of these little books called Two of Me and he got like 400 people from across the city and, and there were like, and I was one of the team leaders and we were giving out these tracks to people and then we were going to give 100, give a million tracks away to people in the city and I would get my team together and my wife and I would give tracks, you know, here's your 50 and here's your 50, here's your 50, okay, we'll meet back at lunch and, and I'd just go in a coffee shop and just sit down and like drink a, drink a Diet Coke or something and I was like, these New Yorkers are crazy, I'm not going to go talk to them.

So, so I'm the guy, I'm not, I'm not a poster child for be baptized in the Holy Spirit and go forth and preach the gospel to all the creation. I'm not the guy, okay, and so, but I'm just sharing like some new things that God's doing in my heart with you and, and the only reason I'm sharing is just because I'm really super excited, I'm really stoked about it, I'm so excited it's just, it's like this stuff that's not me is becoming me, it's like the things that are impossible for me, God's doing them through me because of his, the Father's love, setting me free from fear, when I'm free from fear, I can go up to people with love now rather than fear, like what are you going to think of me and, and, and so went from the grocery store, picked my wife up, went to lunch and then it got really freaky, it's like the waitress walked up and I said, we want to pray for you, is there, is there something wrong, and she goes, no, I'm fine, I said, something with your mom?

She goes, yeah, I said, does your mom have cancer? She looked like she was going to faint, she said, and I was expecting her to say, no, would you get out of my restaurant please? Like, but she said, yes, she has cancer, and I said, well let's just pray for you, and I grabbed your hand and just, I can't believe I just prayed for her, and just you see, like it's just, okay, and no one has knelt down and said, Jesus, please come into my heart, please forgive me of my sin, forgive me of my sin, come into my life, but everyone that I'm meeting now is getting to know that Jesus loves them, and I'm sure, I'm sure there's, you know, there's going to be some times where I'll get to say like, alright, let's pray the sinner's prayer, let's meet Jesus, that's, I know that's coming because that's part of the baptism of the Holy Spirit and power, and so we went to the, and then we go to the mall and I had to pick up some shoes, my son was with me, and he was going in to look for sneakers, and I saw this little stand there, it had, this is going to sound really weird, but like a little pulsating thing that helps get rid of pain, like it sends little electric shocks, I didn't want that, but I thought, hey, there's two people standing there, my son's looking for shoes, I'll just go over there and I'm like, hey, what's this?

And it's like, oh, we send electric shocks, hook me up, you know, and they put these things on my back and he's going, going through it, and I'm saying, you know, it's like, hey, that's good, but you know, there's this power, there's this power that can heal you, there's the power of Jesus, he can set you free from sin, and the guy's like, you know, I'm thinking, please don't turn up the electric shock, Jesus loves you, but, and then his boss walks up and I turn to her and just start talking about Jesus, and she says, well, I'm Jewish, and I said, that's okay, Jesus loves Jewish people too, he loves Christians, he loves Muslims, he loves Jewish people, he loves you, and I said, can I pray for you, and she said, would you please pray for my daughter, I have a two year old daughter, and I

get nervous about her, and she showed me her phone and a picture of her two year old daughter, and I grabbed her hands, we were just praying for her right there in the middle of the mall, now, a year ago, I would have been like, I ain't praying for anybody in the middle of a mall, I'm not, because it's like, people will walk by and look at you, look at that weirdo praying for people in the middle of a mall, I'm just not the

guy that's going to do that, and now, he's not giving me the spirit of fear, but he's giving me the spirit of power, and love, and a sound mind, my mind, there's something in my mind, there's something that the Holy Spirit's power wants to do to you, to give you the mind of Christ for people, that mind of Christ, that sound mind, to me, it doesn't just mean, like, I

feel good about myself, I have good self esteem, I think it means, I have the mind of Christ, and so, when I go into places of darkness, I'm coming with, carrying the light of the world, it's not hid under a bushel because of fear, and that light now opens up to people, and so he gives me a mind that goes like, that person needs Jesus, that person's mom has cancer, that Jewish woman needs her daughter prayed for, and you see, these miracles begin to take place, just because of the Father's love for us, and the Father's love for people, and I ask the Holy Spirit, Lord, would you let the Holy Spirit just love through me to people, love through me, and it's just so freeing that it's no longer based on, on, like, performance, it's not based on, you know, how did I study 20 hours, I used to

study, until recently, I studied about 20 hours a week for a sermon, and they weren't any better when I studied for three hours a week, but I just felt obligated, you know, you're supposed to do this, you're supposed to, and I was studying for 20 hours a week, and please don't hear this the wrong way, not that that's a bondage, or if you study 20 hours because the Holy Spirit tells you to do it, you do it, but I was studying 20 hours because I wanted to make sure every time I get up in the pulpit, I had like, that was a really good sermon pastor, oh, man, we're gonna call our friends, they're gonna download it, and you're gonna be listened to online, oh, how exciting, I could care less about that, and so as soon as I stopped caring less about that, I found myself studying less for

sermons, and studying more to know Jesus, just, just, man, I love you, Jesus, and you love me, and that's a good verse, and, and as soon as I start saying, that'll preach, I say, I rebuke you, Satan, in the name of Jesus, because that's not about preaching, that's about knowing you, that's about loving you, that's about being filled with Abba, Father's heart for me, that's about being filled with the baptism of the Holy Spirit, that's about being filled with love for people, if we get wrapped up in our religious traditions, Bible study will become about our sermons, prayer will become about church growth, our relationship with God will be about whether or not people like us or not, and we gotta be set free from all that, don't we?

We really need to be set free where we're just, where we're just walking around as ambassador of Jesus Christ, and, and so for me now, it's, it's like I care about this, and I wanna, I wanna preach God's heart to you, but, but, but I don't really care about this any more than I care about if I go to lunch later today, of course I'll be here, I may tell you Jesus loves you as well, you need to hear it, but, but to some lost person, to me that's, that's just as important, or if not more maybe, because you've already heard it, you've already heard more, you and me we've heard a thousand times more than we're doing, I mean we, if, I'm skipping around here, excuse me, I don't have any notes, I'm just kind of, kind of winging it here a little bit, but I just bought a new Bible, ugly color, I

understand, it's the only, but it's the only Bible that has the kind of margins that I wanted, because I wanted a new Bible, I just got this about three months ago, I wanted a new Bible that I, I will only mark on it, as if the Holy Spirit will give me power to live it out, I'm going to, I'm going to stop marking my Bible all these promises that I don't believe, all these calls to action that I don't do anyway, go you therefore and preach the gospel to my church on Sunday, I'll do that part, but I can't underline that, because that's not in the Bible, what's in the Bible is go preach the world to all nations, to all people, everywhere you go, just pour out the love of Jesus, so, so I got a new Bible to underline, now it's been about three months,

normally my Bible would have been, like

I'd have studied like five or six books already, and I'd have like half my Bible marked up, and charts and diagrams about end times and things like that, but, but now it's just like I got about four verses in here marked up right now, because I just want to, I want to concentrate on that one, I want, I want to live that one out, you know, so, so the one I have underlined is Acts 10 38, and, and we know that Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit, and he went about doing good, and he healed all those sick, because God was with him, and man, I'm just, and I haven't read a whole, I don't think I've read since January a whole book of the Bible yet, I got close with James, but, but just Acts 10 38, I'm in it every day, just, wait a minute, that's so awesome, he, why did he go about doing good,

why did he heal the sick, why did he preach the good news to the poor, well, because the Father was with him, it says that, because the Father was with him, he, he could do all these things, so, so that's what I want, when we were in Jordan, Pastor Carter got up, and I had not known this before, but the school's motto here is, living for the benefit of others, and I thought, that is so awesome, a school has a motto, all these students have a motto, and it's a great motto, and I don't have a motto, I want, I want a life motto, you know, and, again, my theological mind would, would work towards something like, I want to understand the propitiation and expiation of the second coming of the Christ Jesus, who Lordship of, you know, like, that's not a good motto, it doesn't look good on a, on a

thing up there, so, Lord, give me a motto, give me a life motto, and Lord, give me a life motto, is, again, I was praying in my hotel room, and, and, and I said, Lord, that's a good life motto, do you want me to have that one?

He said, no, what, what's my life motto?

And Lord just dropped two words into my heart, and it just, it just, it's changed my life, I have a life motto, now it's changed my life, and it's, and my life motto is, me too, that's it, there's, and now you're like, wow, that's not too exciting, you don't want that on a banner, like a bumper, a bumper sticker, I'm a license plate, me too, but, but it's thrilling to me, why, because, everything, when I read Acts 1038, it says, and Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit, I go, me too, I want to be filled with the Holy Spirit, and it went about doing good, yeah, me too, I want to do that too, and he healed the sick, yeah, me too, I want to do a little bit of that, and he preached good news to the poor, yeah, I want to do that, and, and, and I heard about the new covenant this morning,

yeah, me too, I want to walk in the new covenant grace, and, and, and Jesus said, no fear, no more fear, yeah, me too, I don't want to live in any fear, and he's giving you love, oh, me too, I want love, and he's giving us power, yeah, I want power too, so, man, just, that's an all-inclusive lifestyle, I mean, that's just like, it's so unlimited, and I like that for me, because it's just, it's not like one thing, because some of us get into our one thing, you know, I'm, I'm in this school, or I'm in that wing, or I'm in that fringe, or I'm in this tent, and God just doesn't have any of that, he's got the whole counsel of the word of God, he's got the fullness of the love of the father for us, and that moves us freely and out of fear, and into, into the works of Jesus, not based on earning

anything from him, because that's fear-based, but based on love, I love him, he loves me, and why not, we want to share him, and everything that's in the new testament, everything that's in the book of Acts, are, are me too realities that we can have, we can have these realities, you can have a me too lifestyle, and, and it set me free from other things, I was, I feel like, I feel a little bad, like, you know, I should pull up a

couch, like you're my therapist or something, I'm just kind of talking about a lot of my problems I've been facing lately, but, but, but if you could bear with me, our, our 50 minutes is not up yet, so, I was, I was, you know, I was just thinking about this, this me too thing, and I thought, that, that sets me free from a problem I've always had, because, I've

said this to people before, I feel weak minded sometimes, because whenever I read something, I get convinced totally by it, so, please don't judge me, because you're going to think I'm in one school or not, but I'll read something about, from Joseph Arminius, Arminianism, and I go like, totally, absolutely, I am 100% an Arminius, that is, that was the best book I've ever read, I am Arminius, and somebody gives me a book about Calvinism, that, I am a Calvinist, that is the best book I've ever read, I am totally a Calvinist, and then somebody will give me another book about, like, the battle between Calvinism and Arminia, I'm going like, oh, I'm confused, this, don't read like five views on Calvinism or Arminia, you, if you're like me, you'll really be confused, like, wow, so I got five

ways I'm thinking about this thing now, and I used to feel like, man, Lord, I'm so sorry, that's so feeble, it's like, you know, like, I like listening to sermons online, and, sometimes I'll listen, there's part of me that loves that sort of good, old-fashioned, revivalist, stomp on the, you know, on the ground, beat the pulpit, yell at people, like, there's something in me that loves that sort of, you know, my grandfather, great grandfather was a fire and brimstone minister, he used to get these little pieces of paper, and he'd wrap them up and put gunpowder in them, and if the crowd stopped listening, he would stand back, and he'd start stepping on them, and sparks and smoke would fly up, and he'd be preaching about hellfire and brimstone, I love that, that's amazing, that's, that was

before we had lights and smoke in our churches, this is like, and so, there's a part of me that likes that, and so I feel like, wow, man, you know, I'm a holiness preacher, I'm gonna live my life, I'm gonna be real serious when I get to the pulpit, you know, because, because, I don't know if you noticed, but I do have a little bit of a sense of humor, so I was like, no more sense of humor, I'm not gonna, I don't know, if anybody laughs in the pulpit, I'm gonna, you know, stomp on some fireworks or something, or get people to get serious about God again now, and so it was like, okay, but the other part of me is like, like this, and I feel like, I told somebody one time, I was like, I don't know if you're gonna judge me for seeing movies, but I do see movies sometimes, and I saw Star Wars,

the first Star Wars, and do you remember, if you saw the first Star Wars, there's, there's the, Obi-Wan, I think is his name, and he comes up to the stormtrooper, and the stormtrooper's guarding the gate, and he goes, you will open the gate, and, and the stormtrooper goes, I will open the gate, and he's just like, easily influenced mine, and I'm going like, you will be a Calvinist, you will be Arminius, yes, I am Arminius, I always felt guilty about that, like, I'm so, like, I wanna be, like not, yeah, thanks, I don't wanna be divided, I wanna be, you know, I wanna be single-minded, and single-focused, and so I felt, yeah, thank you, ah, thank you very much, I wanna be single-minded, I wanna have, you know, I don't wanna be divided, James talks about that, and so I was feeling guilt, and

shame, it's like, man, I'm always, I wish I had a stronger mind, and a more resolute, you know, I know some pastors, like, they believe the same thing since they were like three, you know, it's like, man, I love that, so sometimes I'd like this hard preaching of fire and brimstone, and other times, it's just like, man, that man is so full of love, and grace, I just love that, and, and, excuse me, and, and, and the Lord just revealed it to me, it's like, no, that's not, that's not you being weak-minded, that's you loving all of me, you love, you love a hard word when a hard word's necessary, you love a word of grace when a word of grace

is necessary, he took me to, to, to Isaiah 57, it says there, I am a holy God, and I live in a high and a lofty place, but I also dwell with people who

have a broken and contrite heart, and I thought, God's like me, or, no, I, I know that sounded weird, that sounded really weird, didn't it, it was like, like, that's his, that's his life motto, I want to be like Gary, no, not at all, not at all, no, but maybe, maybe I'm more like him than I realize, it's like, he has a heart to say, I'm high, I'm holy, I, I, I am other, I am to be revered, there's the fear of the Lord, there's, there, there is, don't mess around with God, there's a part of me that says, yes, and amen, I believe that, and then there's the other part of me, grace, and peace, and his, his mercy, who could stand if our sins were counted against us, yes, that's, and so instead of feeling like, so the enemy comes in and tries to fill us with fear about who we are, and, and,

about ourselves, and says, oh, you have a divided mind, the Lord says, no, you don't have a divided mind, you just want all my full counsel, I felt better, I felt better, God wants us to feel better, he wants us to feel his love, he wants us to know that we're, that we're, that we're okay with him, that he's changing us, that he's transforming us, that sometimes he'll, he'll send that fiery prophet, he'll send the, the Leonard Ravenhill kind of guys to you, the Keith Green kind of guys, he'll send them to you, and you're like, oh, I'm such a terrible sinner, and you, good, it's good to know that, but at other times, he's gonna send you the guy that comes along, or the woman comes along, and just says, man, you're, the peace of Christ be upon you, may he walk with you, may he talk with

you, may, may you realize you're, his great friend, may, may his counsel be upon you, so he's given you this, I'll close with this, he's given you, Greg, if you want to come, is Greg here, or whoever, worship team, if you guys come back, he's given us, not the fear, but of love, and of power, and a, and a sound mind, and so that sound mind hears the Father's voice, you, you hear him, and please don't just try, don't, don't be a professional minister, okay?

Like, professional ministers are always worried about Sundays, and the, you know, the two hour pulpit time, or two hour worship time, some places two hour pulpit time, you know, we get worried about those things, and God is saying, no, it's, it's the whole week, it's, it's everything, just live, and move, and breathe, and have your being in me, and, and, and that, that mind, that's free of fear is sound, and then it moves into power, so it has power, so it can, it can do things filled with the Holy Spirit, that, you know, there, there, the Bible talks about gifts of the Holy Spirit, and, you know, John MacArthur had that conference out in California a couple years ago called Strange Fire, you ever hear about that, Strange Fire, and it was basically saying, like, the gifts have ceased for today, and all the Pentecostals got up in arms, like, how dare John MacArthur say the gifts are ceased for today, and they started to say, well, the gifts are operating in our church, but they had to check themselves, like, well, we believe that the gifts operate, but, but why fight him if the gifts aren't in operation in our life, you know what I'm saying, like, like, doctrinally, we believe in the gifts, but practically, we're like, almost like gift atheists, or agnostics, we're, we're actually not seeing the gifts, so, so the sound mind can move in gifts and then in power, there's meant to be power in the gospel, there, there, there is meant to be, and, and so, so again, I'm just ankle deep in some of these things where this fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit's on me, and, and I'm saying, Lord, take me from ankle to knee, to, to, I want to go to one of the, I want to go to all the seminars this afternoon, but, you know, just, just to get more, and I want to go deeper into the things of God, and, and I want to believe the gifts, I, I'm tired of like, you know, when, if you pray for the sick in the church, and you go down, and like, you know, you want to pray for, you know, like, Lord, heal this person of their sneezing, and their coughing, and their cold, and then they don't get healed, and you get a cold, right, that's not good, that's,

that's like that, enough of that, okay, we, we want to believe that God, church, do you believe God heals sick people?

I do, I believe He does. Do we pray for sick people? Yeah, almost always in church, but that wasn't Jesus' lifestyle, that wasn't the disciples' lifestyle, I don't, I don't think I would fit in well with the 12 disciples of Jesus, if there was 13, I was number 13, I would not fit, because when Jesus said, hey, I'm going to send you out two by two, and I want you to go preach the good news, and heal the sick, and raise the dead, and cast out demons, I'd be like, yeah, but if you want me to preach, God, I need about three days off, because I've got to study a little bit, you know, and, and, and when I'm done with my sermon, you know, I'm done, that's, I don't want to pray for sick people out on the streets, I just realized, most of our church life would not fit in the New Testament, right?

It just wouldn't fit, it'd be like, that's this, and that's us, and they're, and they're, they're really far apart, I want to close that gap in my life, don't you? I want to close that gap, and the only way I know how to do that is say, say, baptize me, fresh, give me a fresh baptism where, where I actually, not just theologically believe in signs and wonders, but I'm actually seeing them, and I have enough faith to believe that they can happen, not just in the church, which I believe they should, but also outside the church, and, and there's gifts of discernment, there's gifts of wisdom, there's gifts of mercy, there's gifts of healing, there's gifts of, there's signs and wonders to be taking place, there's gifts to the preaching the gospel to the poor, teaching the good news to those who are lost and hurting, there's, there's, I'll tell you what, if, if, if you'll join me on a new journey of saying, just simply baptize me afresh in the Holy Spirit, and, and I'm going to go crazy, if you'll join me, and if we'll join each other, you know, that's going to really change things in America or wherever you're from, it really is, in a, in a small, simple way, just ever, could you imagine like in your city, you know, say you have a church of, let's take Times Square Church for instance, like 10,000 people, could you imagine if 10,000 people got so baptized in the Holy Spirit that just, and then when they left church on Sunday morning, they all went like in the trains, and the buses, and to a restaurant, and, you know, their neighbor came over to watch football, whatever, what if all 10,000 of them got like so baptized in the Holy Spirit that everywhere they went, they were just loving on people, and talking about Jesus, and praying for people, and giving words of wisdom and knowledge, and saying, hey, I want to pray for your daughter, or I want to pray for you, you know, just seeing, that would change the city, wouldn't it?

And that could happen in your community as well, and if it doesn't happen in your city or community, at least you can say, well, me too, you know, I want it too, I don't know if my church will get it or not, but I want it, and that's really all you're responsible for, let Jesus take care of the rest, let him, you're not called to baptize people in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit, he didn't say he's going to send you, when he goes away, he's going to send the Holy Spirit, right? And so you need to get out of the way, and let the Holy Spirit do this, but let him do it in you.

All right, you can go ahead, what are you doing? You're going to sing? All right, let me pray for you, okay? Stand with me if you would, please. If you'd like a fresh baptism in the Holy Spirit, or just be renewed in a sense of saying, man, I came here, and ministry got all about me, I got all wrapped up in success, I got, and it's all about, and I just wanted to get a fresh baptism in the Holy Spirit, would you just step out of your seat, I want to pray for you, come down to the front, and just say, man, I just need this, I need a fresh love for people, I need a fresh love for God, I need to know that he loves me afresh, once again, thank you. Come on, let's sing this together, as you're coming forward here together.

If you don't mind, just put a hand on the shoulder of somebody near you, and we're just going to close with a simple prayer for one another, two simple prayers, I want you to pray this over each other, a prayer that that person would know that the Father loves them, Jesus, at least, let's do it, let's pray it, Jesus loves you prayer, just pour out the love of Jesus into their heart, and then a me too prayer, just pray, Lord, I want them to have it too, I want them to have the fullness of all that you have, Father, we pray that in the name of Jesus, God, we leave this place today with a me too cry in our heart, God, we want all that you have for us, God, we want to live out the book of Acts, we want to see your spirit move, and we want to be filled with the love of Jesus, Lord, we want to, we want to experience it, we want just more than a knowledge of it, God, we want it in our heart, that it becomes who we are, not just what we're trying to do, that it becomes a reality to us, Jesus, we thank you for that, Lord, I'll just take a few minutes to pray for one another, before we break for lunch, Amen. Amen. Amen.

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