

Encounter With God - Session 1

by Greg Frizzell

The sermon emphasizes the need for a deeper connection with God through genuine prayer, confession, and surrender to experience true spiritual awakening and revival.

Duration: 1:02:40

Scripture: Isaiah 59:1, Matthew 26:69, John 15:4

Topics: "Experiencing God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes that God is not stingy, angry, or unkind, but rather merciful and gracious. He loves to work miracles and save people. However, it is important to understand that God is also a holy God and not just a JCPenny catalog or Santa Claus. The sermon highlights the transformation that Jesus brings to people's lives, helping them overcome patterns of anger and confessing their sins. The preacher also mentions the power of prayer and the importance of repentance and yielding to God. The sermon concludes by expressing gratitude for the unity and answered prayers in the church and the anticipation of further teachings on grace and holiness.

Transcript

Paul and it's just really odd the Lord said come to Petaluma and now I really know why when I've been hearing what God has been doing here it's really miraculous the journey he's had you on and the great thing about that the Word of God says he who has begun a good work in us will bring it to completion you haven't seen anything yet I mean there's no telling what God is going to do we're seeing that around the country there's a little group of churches that they're getting a handle on prayer and really surrendering to Jesus and four or five years later it is so different there's so much larger but not just in number in Jesus being real and it's so exciting let me clear up one thing right here real quick I know you're wondering what kind of accent is that that you have okay well now this

is a weird accent I'm from Tennessee and I pastor a church in Memphis for 17 years I've been in Oklahoma for eight years I always ask when I get up north in Canada what kind of accent is that you are hearing an official tenna homa accent somewhere in the middle I don't know where but you know no matter what our accents are we're family and God is up to something that is absolutely incredible and so what we're gonna do tonight is share a missing element that God's people are getting back and it's allowing him to be about ten times more real I'm not exaggerating then we've known him to be in the last 40 years in fact if I were to ask you can you remember 1905 I know what you'd say hopefully you couldn't

but you know what that's the last time we've seen anything like a great awakening this

country in fact that really wasn't a big one in fact the last 40 or 50 years are not only not an awakening it's the worst moral and spiritual collapse we've ever seen in history of this country and it's a big statement but God is doing something right now in in little churches and big churches and and folks across this country and literally a church this size I know some this size when they get a handle on where you're going in prayer within two or three years some of them are seeing like three two or three hundred people come to Christ in a single year and it's not some great strategies not some great it's just the presence of God becoming so real I wouldn't be surprised that's not where you're headed and you say what do we do with them gotta work that out that's a good problem now how

many of you have read some of the book returning to wholeness okay all right now be real honest how many of you expecting me to be maybe a little older and a lot a lot bigger and maybe even a little mean looking right maybe real mean looking okay let me explain something about that returning to wholeness book okay you're gonna be real real pleasantly surprised I don't breathe fire okay and no it's it's all about grace that book is designed to bring us to conviction but remember God doesn't convict us to condemn us he convicts us to point us straight to grace straight to Jesus to set us free because we're all a work in progress I probably should clarify the goal is not to be a work that a whole book not see anything in your life that needs to be worked on because we all are work in

progress so we're gonna really see this weekend how God can bring great cleansing yes holiness not legalism but a wholeness that comes from joy and his presence and it comes by a missing element that we're gonna recapture in America I've been to India and China God is mightily at work they've got this missing element we're gonna see what it is I'm gonna ask you take your Bible and turn to Isaiah chapter 59 in verse 1 Isaiah 59 verse 1 and also we'll look a lot tonight in John 15 4 now while you're finding Isaiah 59 1 and we'll turn to John 15 4 and and don't worry if you've missed something we have two three more books out there and you can get them for a couple of books how's that you can get them bookstore for 10 if you want to but you can get them to here so that's pretty good deal if

you don't have to take one free okay so they've got all these scriptures in them and so if you miss something don't worry it'll be there for you in the books now while you're finding those scriptures I want you to think about a question there's a little remnant now remnant means a little minority of folks these are teenagers senior adults everybody in the middle but there's a little minority of believers in the past three to five years a sign of revival here's what's happened to them see if you're in this group their personal prayer life has not grown a little bit it has exploded I mean they're losing track of time now when they pray and they're saying that God's voice is about five times more real to them than they ever knew it could be and they're they're sensing a joy even though

they've still got problems we're gonna have problems in this life God doesn't always say yes to prayer but but they've got a joy that's kind of supernatural doesn't depend on a bank account or their health it's just the real presence of God and they're seeing mountains move I mean things have been praying for four years in their families or kids or grandkids they're really now seeing some miraculous movements we're seeing churches have been dead a long time we're not growing but now they're really exploding in growth and seeing so many come to Christ now can you say brother you are describing me probably some a lot of you can say that but maybe some of us would say well not quite I'm headed that way but not quite there you have not in real biblical revival yet well it's really happening

and it's happening because of what we're gonna be looking at there's a missing element we didn't mean for it to be missing but in our busy society there's a missing element that's keeping God from moving here like he is in India China and we're gonna see what that is in the great news it's not hard the great news is missing element that allows the Lord to be so much more real is not out of reach anybody can do a child can do it if we just understand how to really let him be Lord of our heart and it's his grace that's the beauty of it friends I always pray before I read the Word of God is so holy to read Scripture and so let's bow before him right now and I know you're not here to hear me we're here to sit before him let's just bow our hearts before God right now and in the quiet of this

moment would you just focus your total attention on the one who died for you and he's in this room right now by the Holy Spirit he is worthy of all our praise and all of our attention all the time maybe just in the quiet of your heart you would just thank God for giving his only son for you just praise him for Jesus maybe you would praise him that his grace is greater than all of our sin and weakness he accepts us would you thank him for his power that's greater than our greatest impossibilities nothing's hard for God would everyone in here ask God to give me his words and the Holy Spirit to share them Oh Father we bow before you God we worship you God we confess that you are the God there is none beside you there is no other name to be praised God there is no other kingdom that matters

God Lord we know we matter because we matter to you and are in your image Oh God thank you that you're in this room Lord that you love us so much you know about our failures but you justify us Oh God thank you with you nothing's impossible father thank you that across this country there's a group of believers that are exploding in closeness with you and hearing you and being used of you God thank you for what you're doing in this church this pastor father we trust you these these moments will be life-changing for some in this room give us a new vision God of who you've really called us to be and God what you want to do in us and through us father take us out of our doubts and our limits Oh God thank you with you all things are possible Lord get me out of the way let us hear you not

only hear you but God let us obey you by grace in the mighty name of Jesus we pray these things I'm in but what we're seeing is that God is moving us toward a possible awakening I'd be honest with you though if we don't have a great awakening we can't even imagine where this country will be within five to ten years it is an incredibly urgent moment but if we do have another great awakening we've had two in our history I know we don't remember those the last one was in the 1800s you know what would happen though if God did again what he's done before think about there'd be somewhere between 25 and 35 million Americans be tremendously born again and join churches in about the next two or three years that would change everything from Washington to Hollywood and everything in the middle I'm

gonna change everything about all of us and he's really done that and he's beginning to do it again in his little remnant even I'd do it the whole country can do it in your church you can do it in your family your life but there's a missing element there's a reason that it hasn't happened yet this is what it is Isaiah chapter 59 verse 1 the people of God in Isaiah 58 it says they've been just praying and praying and praying and praying and they were seeing God do some things but a lot of mountains frankly weren't moving maybe you're there a little bit you've been seeing God do some things but there's some mountains hadn't moved yet and and some just things not yet to happen and so they were wondering why are we praying and we're not seeing the mountains move yet at least not all of them

and they'd been fasting they've been doing a lot of fasting and I just love to pray it said in Isaiah 58 it even says they confess sin to the point they'd put their face on the ground and put sackcloth and on and ashes

on their head now that's pretty intense prayer we're not doing anything like that but they were doing all that stuff and you know what God wasn't breaking through they weren't seeing a lot of big answers you know we still hadn't seen revival yet so we're not quite there yet either and they were saying why are we doing all this praying yet God's not moving like we want him to and God answered their their their prayer their question he's saying the same thing to us and it's the missing element that'll revolutionize your life and I want to give a quick testimony I shouldn't be

preaching anywhere or writing any books but because of the beautiful little truth I'm gonna share with you tonight God's done everything he's done in my life and I'll share more about that later I had a disease that did great damage to my neurological system in other words it did real serious brain damage people say oh now we can tell that well it wasn't the kind of brain damage that would make you dumb but it totally destroyed my energy and wiped me out and doctor said you got to quit pastoring and you won't be writing any more books and you can you won't have the energy to speak anymore and they were they were right and on top of that the Lord didn't heal me yet that was 25 books ago and 2 million miles of conferences ago I still feel terrible most days but yet I've got a lot more joy

never had my life and a lot more power and ever dreamed of when I was healthy he said man are you crazy what are you talking about what we're about to read is how the Lord doesn't always say yes to every prayer but he'll always give us grace if we'll let him do what we're about to read now Isaiah 59 God answered them this is why he wasn't doing more in their life and here's what he said to and it shocked them it's the same to us and he said behold the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save now that's what he was saying is I hadn't lost my power there's no power shortage in heaven thank you what he was saying is you're praying but the power disconnect does not appear so it means it's got to be down here in us somewhere okay but then he said something else it was almost a little

humorous although I don't think God made it funny but they had a habit back in that day if God wasn't hearing prayer do you know what they did they turned the volume up you said what do you mean they started screaming and shouting their prayers they actually thought maybe it's just not loud enough get all the way to heaven so they would just scream their prayers God's pretty practical look what he said he said neither is the Lord's ear heavy that it cannot hear in plain English he said I don't need a hearing aid he was saying I hadn't lost my power I can move mountains I can part seas he's saying he's saying I can hear just fine he said you're praying and praying you're fasting and fasting but he's saying there's a missing element and then he told him what it was and it shocked them he

said your iniquities have separated you from your God and your sins have caused him to hide his face from you so that he will not hear you but wait a minute here these people were putting on sackcloth and ashes and putting their face on the ground begging God to forgive their sins why would God say that to them who were confessing more than we are frankly why would he say that this is so crucial it's killed us at least some of the power in America they've fallen into the same trap many do today they were confessing sins on the surface they were doing the favor I kind of have a Baptist background although that doesn't matter God's church is a lot bigger than that but they were no Baptist prayer which says Lord forgive all my sins now bless me that's not a bad prayer but if it doesn't go

any deeper than that it really can become just a cop-out that's what they were doing they were kind of saying Lord forgive our sins and they just kind of do that general thing or they might name one or two that was safe that really they didn't mind letting that one go and and God was saying you're not fooling me with that he's saying you're not really letting me go down into the depth of your heart where I really want to

have all of you he can't really fill our heart if he doesn't have our heart he can't be the Lord of your heart and fill you with a mighty Holy Spirit if he doesn't have full access to your heart and he's not going to bull in and take you over like a robot sometimes I think we wish he would don't we so don't you wish there was a holy pill you could take it once and you're

good for a month when that'd be great but there's no such thing he says I want you to choose to let me search your heart choose to let me fully have your heart and he's not going to make us in 2nd Corinthians 7:1 he says we're to cleanse ourselves now it's his grace it's not us we saying cleanse ourselves of all filthiness of the flesh and spirit we'll be doing that as a journey to the day we die but we have to be on the journey we can't be stopping and settling down so what they had done they were they'd kind of fallen in the religious thing in other words really they were seeking God's hand about ten times more than his face they were really doing a lot of God bless me fix me do this comfort me take care of this kind of like a magic genie kind of like a JCPenney catalog and God sees

through that but they weren't saying Lord have all my heart Lord be the total Lord of my heart my attitudes my thoughts my time and and when they were missing that and what he was saying is you're confessing but not really letting me change you deep down and that's a process in fact there's a passage in Proverbs that really kind of sums it up and it's really a missing element in in many parts of America now tell me if I'm quoting this right I want to do a little test here tell me if I've got it right the Word of God says and I'm not gonna give you the verse because I want you to tell me if I've got it right it says whosoever covers his sin shall not prosper and to cover means either to deny it oh that's not really a sin or or it means to just really it means just not look at it long ago

they put blinders on a mule so they couldn't see anything lonely little right it straight ahead sometimes we get that way about our own hearts you know was it Lord is there anything in my heart I need to really surrender and deal with I didn't think so but and I'm not about to take a good look you know or Lord would you search my heart I want you to be the Lord of my life Lord is anything I need to turn from I didn't think so here's my prayer list you know we don't mean to but we really kind of slide a little bit into that or we'll get a little more spiritual than that Lord search my heart I want you to be the total Lord of my heart and Lord you have 15 seconds now we wouldn't really say that but studies show that's kind of what's happened in a lot of folks prayer lives today we didn't

mean to but we're doing what they were doing so he says whosoever covers a sin or won't look at their sin or just kind of glosses over the top of it cannot prosper but it goes on to say whosoever confesses his sin shall have mercy now wait a minute is that right or did I leave something out sounds good whosoever confesses a sin shall have mercy it sounds great what I just told you is wrong it's not right and it's the thing that's blocking a lot of the power and friends this is important when we're saved and know him he's so gracious he'll do some things in our life but there's there's so much more he'll do if we really let him go deep the word that I read to you actually says this whosoever confesses and forsakes his sin shall have mercy so what's happened to a lot of people we didn't

even mean for it to we've begun to kind of confess things on the top not let him really search down into the heart or we'll confess things but we don't turn from them and we've gotten into a pattern where studies show many are actually confessing the same sins over and over and over and over and it's really not any different now than it was a year ago maybe somebody's got the same temper they had or are the same wrong thoughts and though we're confessing it but yet there's not a process of cleansing and victory going on and so we've kind of without meaning to gotten stuck I guess in first gear and first gear is not bad God's

doing some things and we're seeing some answers and in some joy but there's a there's a second third fourth and a and an overdrive that he wants to take us to and

that only comes by the deep cleansing of the heart and this is not about getting beat up this is not about negativism or getting put down or getting shamed it's about getting set free the Lord doesn't say let me search your heart so I can make you just feel terrible he doesn't say let me search your heart so I can beat you up but so I can transform you and set you free give you real joy real life real power and so his voice becomes incredibly clear but that's the missing element in America without meaning to you know we're the instant society we like everything instant quick did you know we invented everything instant that's right instant coffee instant tea instant soup instant breakfast instant everything instant banking you name it it's instant we invented it we like things quick and on

the run and that's great with those things but you know what else we tried to invent instant quiet times instant depth with God no must no fuss little dabble do you you know that oh just a little bits all you need wait a minute though that's not exactly scripture is it now didn't hear it doesn't take two or three hours a day but he's saying I want to take you deeper and John 15 for tells exactly how if you'll turn there people are recapturing this and it is incredible they're recapturing what the Lord really means by a powerful prayer like you know there's different levels of prayer not all prayers the same some Americans think prayers prayers all powerful really isn't some prayers don't have much power because they're not biblical and they're not in the power of God he didn't have to

answer and he won't but God has taken us now to the missing element where prayers as God says become mountain moving then it great God wants to move mountains folks in a great God is not stingy and he's not angry and he's not unkind and he's so merciful he's so gracious man he loves to work miracles he loves to save people he loves to hear prayer but we have to understand he really is a holy God he's not a JCPenney catalog he's not Santa Claus he's not the just the success coach he is the Holy Lord of the universe and that's the majority of his message that's how he transforms us and then his powers everywhere and so John 15 for is how Jesus is absolutely transforming people sing husbands and wives learned this you wouldn't believe what God's doing in their kids it's incredible John 15

for Jesus said this abide in me and it's really a command he said abide in me or remain in me and I and you as a branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine neither can you unless you abide in me it goes on to say I am the vine and here's what we are you are the branches he who abides in me and I and him and look at this bears a little fruit is that what the Bible says he who abides in me bears a little fruit oh no he says you're gonna bear much fruit well much fruit by whose definition by our definition of God's definitions what kind of fruit is that what does he mean by much fruit well you remember an old guy named Peter that was just a fisherman he wasn't educated and all that wasn't fancy and in fact at one point Jesus warned him said you're all gonna leave me so

they may leave you I'll never leave you I'm gonna die for you right now he said before the rooster even crows nor you're gonna deny me three times and Peter started cursing and swearing and saying I don't even know the man but remember what he was doing just a few weeks after this the Lord in God's grace wonderful he could let anybody give the sermon on the day of Pentecost he let Peter give it who'd been cursing and swearing and saying he didn't even know him a few weeks earlier but now God had changed him now he was up preaching and if we would have flunked a preaching course it wasn't three points and a poem in there anywhere is a terrible sermon but the power of God was so on old Peter that literally 3,000 people got baptized publicly they became a public enemy of the Roman government

you talk about power they were willing to risk their life they were so changed that's much fruit now that doesn't mean we all do that but God isn't little he's not stingy he wants to flow through you in much fruit I mean power I mean reality where he's real to you even if he doesn't heal your Lyme's disease that you got joy anyway and I discovered there was something better than healing sometimes it's him being so real to you that even though you got a lot of pain it just doesn't much matter because his grace is real and it's okay and it's real he's talking about much fruit but he's saying this will only happen if you really abide in me now the fact is with many believers today study show it is a little fruit what's the fruit he's talking about here by the way well that's great news this

fruit will solve every problem we got meet every need most of all it'll glorify God the fruit he's talking about is the fruit of the Holy Spirit that's at least part of what he's talking about and think about the incredible fruit of the Holy Spirit that's just the life of God that Jesus said if you believe in me really believe he means a river of living water is going to gush out of the innermost being that's the presence of God that's the life of God folks we can't work up holiness we can't work up joy have you ever tried to just grit your teeth and be joyful when you just feel awful it doesn't work does it have you ever tried to work up peace when you're just scared to death but he's saying I will give you a supernatural a sense of these fruits that's the fruit that love can you love

your enemies not in the human strength we can he's I'll give you a love this for your enemies kind of love where you hung on a cross and said father forgive them while they crucified him we can't do that but he's saying I'll give you that kind of love that the fruit of the Spirit I give you joy you remember Paul and Silas in the Bible they were in prison thought they might get their heads cut off the next morning and they were in there moaning and groaning right they were in there singing how were they singing loud it made the Bible they had so much joy folks this is real I've been with people in India who knew they were gonna die they weren't there under persecution and they look me and they said when we go back to our communities they know who we are and they've already killed some of

us and some of us are going to die we know it we're afraid they're going to take our children and they did there's nothing more sacrifice than that I never will forget them looking me in that high and saying we are so honored to give our lives for the Savior I've never seen joy like it that's what he's talking about you know something silly some of the things we worry about some of the things we let take our joy he's saying I'll give you a supernatural joy and you know the old fourth fruit of the Holy Spirit it's not near as popular who can tell me what the fourth through the Holy Spirit is well the old King James has long-suffering and one of the others is gentleness you know if we had a big conference and it spent a million dollars promoting it but it was a long-suffering and gentleness

conference I wonder how many people would show up okay about ten people would show up now here's the point that's not big to us but that's huge to God he wants to fill us with gentleness and patience wouldn't it be impossible to have a good old fight in a marriage if both of you full of an unconditional love and great patience it'd ruin a good fight every time wouldn't it you know what else it would ruin it ruin an awful lot of anxiety if we're full of a supernatural peace it's gonna be impossible to have a bunch of anxiety if we're full of a supernatural miraculous joy unless your problem is physical and sometimes it is we need a doctor but a lot of times it's emotional and spiritual and he's saying I'll give you a joy that's unspeakable and doesn't depend on your bank account doesn't

depend on your situation and it's real folks it's very real and and that kind of passion for souls you can't work up passion to see people save you can't guilt yourself into it but he says if you'll let me have your

heart feel abide in me that's the real key to the whole thing so here's the point if you and I are not if our prayer life is really not moving a lot of mountains and his voice is not clearer than our husband wife or best friend I'm not exaggerating if we're abiding in him his his presence is going to become very real and I'm not talking about being strange if you're if you're hearing voices in the air I don't know if I'd tell anybody okay now I'm sometimes he speaks like that he sometimes but most the time he speaks by his spirit through scripture but he speaks very real in

your heart and you know it's him and this is the fruit he's talking about God being real and he says like a river not a little trickle much fruit not little fruit but studies show most believers aren't really experiencing this we're not it is a little fruit it is a little touch and that's a little even a little touch is great but God now wants to turn the power on he really does well how does he do it the keys abiding he said look if you abide you can this is gonna be happening but if you don't abide he says you can't do anything now going to church is not necessarily abiding doing study course is not necessarily abiding the word abide here is a relationship term in the Greek text it literally meant to remain in but it really means to stay absolutely close to I love to put it this way

it's learning how to live so that nothing is blocking the flow of Jesus in your life nothing is blocking his presence to transform to use you to pray through you to love through you and and that's what happens if things get in the way and then the river is blocked up and look at verse 6 he says if anyone does not abide in me he's cast out as a branch and he's withered what have you ever felt withered I mean the joy is not there that this voice is not real you're kind of dry the tempers there it's hard to love that the wrong thoughts are there and you're trying and you're trying you're gritting your teeth but boy you're fighting and you're just it's just you're withered and we go through times like that and we're gonna have battling this well I'm not talking about a miracle day and and

goosebumps all the time you walk with Jesus not always gonna be that way but it's always gonna be real and powerful so what does abide mean that's the key to everything and here's the problem in our busy instant society we've missed the biblical some have missed the biblical understanding of what he really means by abiding you know what inoculation means you get a weakened version of something that keeps you from getting the real thing and we don't even know what's happened to us that's really happened in busy America we've gotten in a knock we've gotten inoculated sometimes from biblical prayer we've got a little taste of it and it's great but we haven't gone into the depth so abiding is three things to be really close to somebody you have to talk to them a lot not a little and you have

to talk to them about things that are deep not the weather not surface things well that's your prayer life and so what's happening right now that little remnant that little minority their prayer life has gone to a whole new level with God their prayer life has embraced God's heart by letting him cleanse their heart deeply you know that was right in the middle of the Lord's prayer God forgive us our trespasses and he didn't mean that as a little general prayer because in the same sentence do you remember what he said God forgive us our trespasses as what as we forgive others boy that puts it in a whole different light does that means you came to God forgive my sins now bless me he's saying you have to let him really look in your heart make sure no anger no bitterness is hiding down

there because it hides so easily and real quick and we don't see it well you know we'll say I've forgiven them but we say with clenched teeth you know or we'll say I've let it go but I still got that speech I'd like to give to certain people and so it's hiding on us so that what he's talking about the powerful prayer is where we really know how to let him have our whole heart and it's not hard and it doesn't take three hours a day

but it does take an intentional willingness to let him take us deeper the Lord's prayer it's got about five elements in it but the problem is many people's prayer life has about two as far as any depth but God's changing that so he says if you'll let me take you to a stronger prayer life and a child can do this he's saying it won't be long till the river will be

flowing you ever seen an apple tree or standing out in a field just straining so hard to bear apples no you if they're connected to the water they're gonna bear apples that's natural that's what he's saying when you and I learned to let him take us to a powerful prayer life that has cleansing in it then the fruit his his character his voice is gonna be clear your prayers are gonna have a lot more power you'll have a lot more faith when you pray there's a big difference in hope so and no so praying big difference and God says very important we pray in faith pray based on his promises yet studies show many believers are caught in in hope so praying you know we're praying I hope he does something hope he answers his prayer God wants to take you way beyond that he wants to get you to a place

where not all he doesn't tell us everything but many times you're gonna be praying promises he's given you when you're abiding the secret of powerful prayer is good hearing really is Bible says faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God and the word in that text means personal word you speak into your heart it's it's the closeness so he's saying my children if you'll let me take you from the average American prayer life that we kind of got stuck a little bit lower than the mountain moving he's saying soon the fruits gonna start flowing now there's another part of abiding though it's not just talking to God it's also listening to God you could be with somebody all day and if you did all the talking you wouldn't be close to him you'd just be talking but when we learned to let

prayer become a dialogue it was never meant to be a monologue in many quiet times you'll even see it in many of the prayer of acrostics that we read and I'm not knocking them they're not bad but they don't go far enough most of the prayer acrostics don't have a listening element and it's just all about us talking to God but prayer is a dialogue where we learn as we pray to also have a listening spirit through his word but where we're really listening and then it's amazing how real it becomes he's taking us there let me give you a quick example I believe God has a sense of humor I know he does because when I was 16 he started calling me to preach now you say why is that so funny I had the worst stage fright you've ever seen in your life I'd rather take a beating to get up in front of five

people and try to speak do you remember Barney Fife in that movie the ghost and mr. chicken trying to give that speech he was standing up there you know going like this I made him look brave let me tell you it's awful I tried to speak and I get so nervous my voice would spasm one time it was so bad it made a loud choking sound three three deacons stood up they thought I was having some kind of a fit you know I think there's gonna give me the Heimlich maneuver I said I'll never never try to preach again a very embarrassing but God kept calling me to preach and I kept begging him take the fear away and he just wasn't hearing my prayer but he showed me why in his mercy and it was this you know I had a little quiet time I've been a Christian about six years and I had the average little

American quiet time and it was okay but I wouldn't let him cleanse my heart at that part wasn't in my quiet time I was kind of doing the forgive my sins and Paul's 15 seconds thing and and things will always be down there you don't realize if you if that's all you do none of us are so good we don't need that and so I had a godly youth ministry said great tell me about your quiet time and I told him what I did I read a little devotion to read a few scriptures I said a little prayer I asked God to forgive me and just things like that and he's a great what do you let him search your heart and he read me that scripture where God says

we're to ask him search my heart and try my thoughts he said are you doing that said well I say forgive my sins he said no it's not what that means he said do

you take a little time like maybe five minutes or so and just really let him look deep into your heart so he can really fill your heart and what I had to get awesome no I'm not doing that he said great that'll change your life because he's not gonna make you let him fill you and so so how do you do this and he gave me several scriptures and about four or five areas in my life not that you have to do that every day and he said add this just give God five or ten minutes more and just ask him Lord I have any thoughts that I really need to work on today and yield to you just ask him I said like what he said like anger like unclean thoughts or jealousy just whatever and he gave me a list okay he said Greg ask him if you got any attitudes you need to yield and so just ask him if there's some

words you need to work on and he gave me a couple of theirs especially anybody I'm mad at hadn't really forgiven or somebody that hurt and hadn't asked him to be and he said just just let God really have your heart Greg and see what he'll do that's okay I hadn't been doing that I started doing that and you know what happened well he started showing me things and everything's I didn't even realize we're in the way things I didn't even do on me that was a problem with God and it wasn't that he was condemning you it was a he was so he could fill you so he could really start working on you and so I started doing that I was just 16 boys incredible within about three or four weeks of course he'd shown me about 10 or 12 things in my life I didn't even realize we're hindering God but he's

gracious the moment you just confess it and get honest with him and in it you're gonna confess it once you never deal with it again you've got work on it son but the Word of God came alive and I'm seeing people that have never had a quiet time all their life add this element and they said they've grown more than six months and they've grown in six years some said 60 years it's incredible how this takes you to a deeper level of abiding here's what happened word of God came alive the joy my life got greater God's presence was just a lot more real and but then the big test came my pastor called said Greg he said we want you to speak at a meeting boy my heart started beating faster as who's gonna have me is gonna be at that meeting that's all I was worried about he enacted mysterious he said

well you come and gave me the address and I went and it was a gymnasium there were hundreds of people in there and I said I'm not going in there I sat in the car and I thought I'm not going I didn't I didn't go out finally had a thought that got me in the door I thought I know what it is I'm probably gonna speak to a little group of youth in the basement maybe I can do that I went in there and they jerked me up on the stage in front of hundreds but I wasn't the main speaker but I was sitting on that stage had a death grip on the arms of that chair I was looking at those people my eyes got bigger by the minute I couldn't move that got my time to speak they just started jabbing said get up there it's your time to speak not staggered to my feet my legs wouldn't even been I well got a hold of

that podium I scared to death and I never will forget that night I just prayed so I said I did manage to stutter these words I said let us pray and when they bowed their heads I looked at that side door and a rapture almost happened I thought I'm getting out of here I almost I almost ran out the door but God's so merciful I bowed my head and prayed I said God I can't preach God I'm scared and God brought that promise back to my mind he had told me he said yeah if you'll spend time with me I'll take your fear away and it was like God was saying are you gonna trust me or not and then I never will forget I prayed out loud I said God I can't preach but I'm just trusting you got to preach through me I hope you believe in miracles he works miracles a lot he's not stingy if we'll let him have

our whole heart some prayers take years this one was instant all the fear left I mean it's just incredible I read back started preaching like I've been preaching for 30 years but more than that the power of God began to move people begin to come to Christ right and left it was a tremendous move of God the altar was just filled they still talk about that night in Lexington Tennessee 36 years ago when that happened and oh of course you know what happened when I got home I thought well I'm the next Billy Graham now it didn't take the Lord long to show that was not the case but what he did show me now you know I still have to come back and recapture it sometimes he was saying it's not you speaking ability you still don't have enough still don't he's saying it's the time my children will spend

with me long enough and let me cleanse their heart deep enough that I can really fill them full enough to flow through them with my power in life like a river and precious friends we tried to make an instant shortcut out of that and it's not about power it's about closeness with Jesus when the closeness is there you can go through the losses of life and yes there's pain but there's a grace and you're not alone anymore you can go through the times he says no I can't answer that prayer yes or I'm it's gonna take me 20 years to answer that prayer or he doesn't heal you of limes but he gives you his presence and it's even more real so he's saying I love you he's saying I want to be more real to you than your husband wife or best friend but he's saying I can't do it at a distance and I'm not a

JC Penney catalog and he's saying I'm not a magic genie he's saying I'm to be the love of your life and that's really what it's about he's saying if you'll draw close to me so the abiding is letting him take us beyond just a little quick quiet time now we talked to God all day and that's good prayer and it is good prayer but there's something about that quiet time Jesus said first words out of his mouth when they said Lord teach us pray first words will be important wouldn't they and first words were when you pray go into your closet shut the door seek the Father in secret he was saying don't be like the Pharisees seen a man and but he was saying closeness and power and prayers about you and God up close and personal with the cell phone off and then it's silly was I got him a secret with

all my heart we got five minutes hurry up and we don't mean to say that but see he listens to what we do not what we say so he's saying I love you so much he's not making this legalism he's not gonna get out of stopwatch and say well I would have blessed you but you're five minutes short well I would have blessed you but you didn't say your prayers in the right order it's not about a program but it is about a hunger for closeness not just for his hand a blessing but for his face of hearing his stillest smallest whispers and then he feels you like a river and so then he uses you like a mighty mighty mighty miraculous power oh we're seeing husbands and wives get a handle on this and they've struggled with their marriage and it's hard to love each other but when God loves through you it's

not hard anymore and we're seeing people that have had so many bondages and they got so many mountains that they're burdened about they take this deeper step of complete cleansing and they learn how to let the Lord really have the whole heart and that's what he means by abiding because there really is a third element if you're gonna be close to somebody have to talk to them a lot you have to talk to them well talk to them deeply have to listen to them very carefully of course that's taking in his word you've heard the expression about someone that's on a diet well he or she doesn't need enough to keep a bird alive you know what that means eating very little that's happened to us with the Word of God in this society we're eating in just a verse or two and God wants to give us a little more

than that he said we're to live by the Word of God so we're seeing many believers that got caught in the quiet times that are just so short and don't get me wrong if you you know that's all you have time for some

days God'll honor that don't feel bad about that but that shouldn't be a problem there shouldn't be a pattern so we're seeing people just set that clock a little earlier and let and add the cleansing of their heart to their time with God the deep cleansing and you know we don't ever get over that we don't ever get past that I got some bad news for you those of you that have read that holiness book you say I'm glad I'm done with that thing you'll never be done with that thing you'll be done with the book but you'll never be done with the need to be letting him take those

scriptures and be continually cleansing your heart yes well great no one ever get clean we are clean in his eyes right now by the blood of Jesus we've arrived but it's it's also the practical process of him changing us and that'll be we'll do that till the day we die problem is most aren't doing that and that's why we see a little blessing some blessing but not the mountains moving not the explosion of baptisms that God wants you to know when a work gets really really real you're gonna see a mighty explosion of people getting saved and we're headed there we're headed there many of us are not quite there yet though but that's where he's about to take us so he says I want you to abide in me and you're gonna bear much fruit the fruit of character the fruit of power when you pray there'll be

power there's another great passage Ephesians 5 18 the Word of God says Paul said don't be drunk with wine we're in his excess but instead be being filled the Greek is literally be being filled it's a daily thing it's a moment-by-moment thing be being filled with the Holy Spirit have you ever wondered why the Lord compared being drunk on alcohol with being full of the Spirit why don't he draw an analogy there have you ever thought about that well for one thing you know some people are drunker than others you know that don't you they have a thing called blood point alcohol they measure how drunk somebody is okay that's true in the spiritual realm sometimes I think we mistakenly think being full of the Spirit it's like right here and you got all of it and one half an inch over and you have

none of it it's not that way it's kind of a thing of it's gradual it's more and more it's not that we get more of him but as we learn to let him really have our heart and learn to let him search a heart he gets more of us and then it sure seems like we have more of him but I love the way put it being drunk on our you've seen when we're someone's really drunk on alcohol what does it do well it changes folks doesn't in very bad ways I'll use Barney Fife as another example something Barney Fife was really drunk on alcohol scary Barney he might walk up to a pro football player and say I'd like to fight you but alcohol changes people in a bad way what God is saying is don't be like that instead be changed by being surrendered and full of Jesus and wonderful is what you said what does that mean

it means scared people will become very peaceful people it means people with a bad temper will become very sweet spirited and kind and positive means people that don't have much joy full of the Spirit of God they'll be joyful people that don't have any excitement don't want to tell anybody about Jesus full of the Spirit of God they'll have excitement people that just don't have any confidence they'll have boldness it's a wonderful transformation in the very precious image of Jesus and that's where he's taking us so what's happened to many in modern America without me we didn't mean to and God loves us none of this is about getting to love you more he couldn't love you more he loves you right now he's so gracious but he's saying I can't flow through you fully if I don't have you fully and

he said you have to make that choice you have to let me have all down to the bottom just just open it up to me where this takes us is his incredible closeness that that's what it's all about his voice becomes clear when his voice becomes clear to you you have much greater faith when you pray I'll give you an illustration my wife and I well I'm gonna give you the illustration about the Lyme's disease what it did when

I had it they didn't know what I had that's why I did such damage I had a serious case didn't know what I had didn't get treated properly for a long time and so it did all the damage to my neurological system so I had no energy just totally wiped out it hurt my emotions really bad I felt I was kind of like Spock on Star Trek I just didn't feel anything and so I couldn't hardly

function and I was about to quit and because they said we don't know if you'll get better and you can't minister in that condition they were right just before I resigned the Lord spoke to me out of 2nd Corinthians 12:9 and it really wasn't what I wanted to hear I was like oh God heal me heal me heal me a lot of times he will but out that passage is where Paul was begging to have his thorn removed you know if Paul was begging it must have hurt because Paul was tough and Paul was begging God to remove his thorn and God said I'm not gonna remove your thorn but he said I am gonna teach you something I'm gonna teach you that in your weakness my strength will be made perfect and I'm gonna give you more grace I'm gonna give you grace that's what God said to me I said Lord how do I get more grace

and I've been a pastor for 10 years at that time we'd seen God do some pretty incredible things but God said there's a little deeper level of cleansing I want to take you to you you don't have to be a pastor to experience this this is for everybody and you know what I thought I'd done the cleansing I remember talking to the Lord I kind of argued with him a little bit no I was arguing with the Lord I thought I was just talking my own thoughts but I said now Lord I've done all that cleansing I know about that Lord I've gone through those lists you know what he said to me he said you just think you have a lot of times we just kind of skim over it a lot of people read through that return to holiness book and they just kind of read it and I'm glad I'm done with that but they didn't really pray

through it and God said that happened to me I'd read through some of those lists but there were some areas I kind of just kind of oh that's for somebody else and God took me to a deeper level of cleansing and it wasn't long that sure enough the illness wasn't gone I can't I can't describe it but there was a joy like I'd never had my even greater than I ever had in my life and his voice became even clearer my preaching got even stronger and then then we started writing books like a machine and I'm not a writer I'm not a writer and it's so incredible how when we really let him have all of our heart and that's a that's a process he just becomes so much more real that ministry meant that God told us to send books to different places around the world we don't my wife don't have any money so

God has to do all that and to show you what God does about three years ago we needed \$20,000 just like that it's amazing what will happen India called us not about four years ago and said we've got to have books it'll it'll touch five million people boy my heart started best five million they said yeah I said how many books do you need to do that because and they said we just need 500,000 books I saw just 500,000 because ten people were ten people will read a book there and I said well how much money do you have and they said we don't have any money I thought oh I said what do you want to do said we want you to give us 500,000 books okay so we started praying about and you know what we didn't quite get 500,000 but God gave a lot helped us get a lot but about three years ago Brazil was

begging us for books in Portuguese and it was gonna touch about 50,000 people which would touch about 250,000 the way they share books and we had a deadline had to get it to him by a certain time and we didn't have any money at all to help them in our ministry and I was begging God for that \$20,000 and we're just wasn't coming and the deadline was can we gonna miss this great opportunity maybe you felt like that you've got a great need and you're praying but it's just not coming and you're wondering why you know what the Lord said to me and folks here I am doing prayer conferences you know what he said to me he

said oh buddy your own time with me has gotten just a little bit too short but do you know what he really said he said your cleansing time with me has gotten just a little bit too

quick and you know what I did not even realize that it happened to me and folks I'm not talking about you have spend hours a day or some fancy thing but we don't realize this happened to us we slide into the kind of just putting it on automatic pilot and I've done that didn't even realize it and what the Lord was saying to me he was saying you're more interested in the \$20,000 my hand a blessing than you are closeness with me and I want you to hear my voice I want to be real to you that's what it's really all about is closeness and so he you know he's always right have you ever noticed that he's always right so I sure enough I slowed it down it's okay God were I lame cleanse me even deeper and sure enough he was right there was some attitudes down there I really hadn't yielded thought I

had said I had but I really hadn't we do that a lot and his presence became sweet again you know friends what happens as we get used to living with his presence not real sweet and not real clear to wait till that gets normal and you don't it's like kind of like Samson lost his power and didn't know it God wants to help you get over there and so God's presence became real again but the need was great and the deadline was coming and I thought what we're gonna do and there were two great big churches that we had a we were kind of booked up for a while by the grace of God but there were two really big churches said now if you if you get shake loose if you have a cancellation let us know and and we're gonna try to work you in I thought that's how God's gonna do it that great big church well

that's what that's nothing to them I thought they'll do it so I started calling God in the spirit of God said don't call him wouldn't give me peace and I didn't know what to do there's a tiny tiny tiny little church also found out we'd had a cancellation I was a tiny little poor church in a just a terribly poor area and I didn't think I should go there at all you know I thought well I'm gonna stay home with my wife one Sunday had to be blessing be home my wife and so the next morning in my time with God the Lord said take that little tiny church and you know again I didn't realize it was the Lord I thought oh no oh no I need to be home with my wife that Sunday I'm not going that that church but the Lord was so merciful that still small voice said take the little church so you know I think

I think this is God speaking to me so I call him said you know I think I do have liberty to come if you'll let me come and they said well sure come on they were gracious and I went and it was sweetest little people just a precious little meeting and but then in the day we're about to leave and I already noticed this woman folks now I'm from West Tennessee and this just didn't look right to me this woman was in church with a robe on and I don't mean a choir rope she had a robe on and I thought what's she doing here with a robe on you know I just didn't I thought was something wrong with her you know and and sure enough she was hanging around behind the back of the church and wouldn't leave and I thought I gotta walk by her and walk by her you know it does so I started to walk out and that

little woman came toward me and I thought okay well we got here and she said and she couldn't couldn't speak well and she said I don't have good books out and I said oh there's something wrong with this poor little lady and she said I said ma'am she's all how to get books out I said ma'am finally understood her she said I want to help get books out and I didn't say anything those people we need \$20,000 all I said was y'all pray for us to help put Brooks in Brazil that's all I never say to a group we need a certain amount of money and that little woman said I want help with books out I thought this is sweet she's gonna give me five dollars into her that's a lot I was touched you know she got a little check and started riding it real like she's having a hard time I thought this is precious

you know and she didn't want me to see it she just folded it smiles and put books out I saw I'll sure do it ma'am second pocket didn't think about it and started home I had to get some out of pocket pull that check out look first thing I noticed didn't have an address on it didn't happen it looked like a fake check I thought she'd give me a fake check you know but then I saw it was for \$20,000 I said how could this be that little old woman was a medical doctor from India and what she had on was what they call their casual robe I didn't have enough sense to know what it was and and she was a godly woman and she was sitting in that congregation and the Spirit of God just said to her give that old boy \$20,000 she just hauled off and did it and you know I got home that night I thought oh

isn't it wonderful I heard the Lord you know what God said to me he said oh buddy you came that close to those people not getting those books and then gently but very clearly he said to my heart you have no idea over the last 20 20 years how many \$20,000 you missed when I got in a hurry and you know when we don't slow down and we're after his hand give me give me bless me bless me and he's saying I just want you to really let me have your whole heart so I can make you into the image of Jesus he's saying if you do that you want to worry about the \$20,000 and and even when I have to say no to some prayers it's gonna be okay because his grace will be sufficient we're seeing husbands and wives get promises from God when they let God cleanse their heart their hearing clears up and they learn

how to pray for their their family they learn some promises to pray and I could just stand here all night and tell you of miracles I've seen with her kids and grandkids when they just let God take them a little deeper and let God begin to help them pray his promises in faith and they begin their prayers became as the Bible says the effective fervent prayer of a clean heart we have to understand that James 5:16 says it is the effective fervent prayer of a clean heart but that also means the ineffective casual prayer of a carnal believer avails little a lot of folks don't understand that Oh prayers prayer no prayers not prayer when the heart is really clean and yielded that the the presence of God is a lot stronger but I want to encourage you to your depth this is not hard this is not out of

reach and no we're not perfect and we know we're not going to be on this earth but if we'll just be surrendered and honest and give him time not rush him and God will work with your schedule you got to do all this in the morning some some don't you might do some in the morning and you might do some more before you go to bed God will work with you but this is what he's doing and there are men and women teenagers boys and girls across this country who've made a love commitment to abide in Jesus the way he means friends it's very important that we understand what he means by these words when he says abide he's not talking about a two-minute quiet time on the run he's just not when he says abide he's not talking about God forgive all my sins now bless me he's just not he's saying if you'll

add the search my heart and then and then let him do it it won't be long you'll hardly recognize yourself I'm seeing it all over this country where folks have made that adjustment they don't have just a little quiet time the cleansing is in it maybe not every day but it's there and it's deep and it's gotten thorough and it usually takes God about four to six months to cycle people through a deep enough cleansing that it just becomes phenomenal a lot of people quicker than that but the point is it always works you say why because it's not an it's a him and he says if you seek me with all your heart you'll find me he says if you draw near to me I'll draw near to you James 4a he says in James what you draw near to me by letting me really cleanse your hands and really purify your heart and

it's a lifestyle it's not you it's not you do the wholeness book you got it it becomes a lifestyle so brother Greg it's negative is the most positive thing in the world cleansing is not negative it's wonderful it's in grace

repentance is not negative it's positive it's about surrendering to Jesus you say well what's he doing what he's doing he's helping believers see when many of us there's just a few TV programs we just need to turn off and it's just real specific things like that and then their mind and heart clears up there's just some people that we need to finally say God I really forgive them from the heart this time and I'm not going to keep saying that speech I'd like to say to him Lord I'm really gonna let it go and you know he gives you the grace to do it when we get honest Lord

I'm really gonna go to those folks that I know in my heart you told me to go to and ask them to forgive me and so many believers are saying you know God told me three years ago go to my brother go to my sister and you know what I just didn't do it and they're saying God with your help I'm gonna I'm gonna kind of make those adjustments it is incredible what starts happening so many things people yield in anger there they've had a they've had a pattern of that short fuse for years and they've confessed the temper for years but it's still there and now they're learning how to let it go and how not just to confess it but to repent of it not that they're perfect but it's not the same as it was four months ago it's different and that's what he's doing he's taking us from just confessing to

changing and just from the shallow shallow little prayer to Lord I give you everything could I ask you just about your head and heart for a moment before God just for a moment every head and heart bowed before the Lord we're just kind of kicking off this conference tonight but here's the question I really believe the Lord wants me to ask you right now could you say brother Greg in my busy lifestyle I think it's happened to me I think I've kind of stopped with a little dab will do you quiet time I didn't mean to but brother Greg I believe I have you see the devotions were never meant to be all we need they're fine they're wonderful we ought to read them but they were never meant to be everything so is it possible it's just dawned on you tonight I've stopped there and God is saying let's go

deeper and he's saying to you it's not hard it's not out of reach it's not legalism if you miss a day he's not gonna jerk his hand off of you you can do this but tonight maybe there's been a lot of excuses in your mind I'm too busy or I don't know how I'm too weak I'm not a not a preacher or doesn't matter oh there's no second-class the children with God but tonight you've hungered for deeper closeness with God you've wanted to see more power in prayer you've wanted a greater faith but somehow it's just kind of looted you you've wanted to hear that voice so clear but somehow it's just not that clear and tonight he's begun to show you it's about abiding it's about depth it's about the unhurried time with the door shut it's about carving out significant time it's about most of all it's

about really letting him search your heart and it's dawned on you tonight I haven't really done that maybe even as you read that wholeness book he showed you a lot of things but see he didn't show him to you to beat you up but to say let's work on yielding tonight would you say Lord I'm just gonna ask you to pray this prayer just between you and God Lord I want to go deeper just ask him Oh God show me how in these days this day together God show us how show me how to go deeper just ask him God show me how to go deeper God show me how to hear your voice clearer than my husband wife or best friend just ask him that that's what he wants for you God show me how to hear your voice clearer than my husband wife or best friend would you just ask him Lord teach me to seek your face and not just

your hand maybe he would pray Oh God teach me that prayer is not always getting a yes but it's getting closeness with you Lord I want closeness with you even tonight it may be that you already know some things even in the brief moments we've been together that there's some things you you're aware I've been confessing but I haven't been forsaking I'm confessing some of the same things I was six months ago and

they're really no different do you understand that's not biblical confession and tonight you say Lord show me how to be changing he loves you he will do that in your life maybe with some of us it is a temper just lay it before him right now he's so he's so loving maybe it's anxiety maybe it's fear maybe it's unbelief it's really got a grip on you just lay it before him right now Lord

I don't want to be confessing the same thing six months from now no different lay it before him I want to repent God maybe it's unclean thoughts we're in an epidemic of people just in bondage to unclean thoughts oh listen he can set you free would you just lay it before him right now oh how he loves you there's nothing impossible with God if he has all your heart he can do it but he has to have all your heart there's some in this room you've got mountains in your relationships that just seem impossible your heart is broken maybe with your kids or grandkids would you just lay that whole thing right in the hands of God right now and say Lord whatever it takes in me I want to be yielded just give it all to him right now he loves you so much oh father thank you for what you want to do in us

God thank you that you love us just like we are Lord you want to be changing us father thank you you care more about our loved ones and we do Lord you care about us knowing you oh God how I pray you'll encourage these precious people father how in these days together they're gonna understand exactly how to take this deeper step God help nobody here to feel overwhelmed or condemned Lord help no one here to feel that they can't be so mightily used by your spirit God help no one here to feel that they can't know you with tremendous intimacy Lord help no one here to feel second-class father thank you for your grace thank you for your incredible plan for us to abide in you and God to bear much fruit and to know you and to glorify you and father thank you you're gonna get us past just seeking

your hand but Lord to glorifying you and letting you use us to bring people to you oh God thank you for what you're doing in this church God it's a miracle the way you've grown them Lord that the prayer room father the unity of this church father we know you're doing that God the answers to prayer they've seen Oh father help us to understand it's just the beginning and father there's just no telling what you're gonna do in the days ahead as we take these deeper steps father above everything I pray everyone this room will feel your arms around them right now and they'll feel great hope of you being far more real far more powerful in and through their lives Oh father take us deeper as the if the weekend unfolds teach us to know you to pray to be clean to be yielded and father will give you

all the praise for the miracles that are surely going to happen but we ask all of this in the mighty holy blessed name of Jesus and all God's people said amen I can't thank you enough for this beginning night this is kind of just a little introduction session tomorrow we'll take it deeper and I'm just so excited about being with you though the unity this church has had it's just such a miracle yeah I go all over the place and it's not always that way the answers to prayer you're seeing are just phenomenal and we're seeing it folks do what you're doing and for long it's incredible the outpouring of God comes so thank you for letting me be with you and let's see brother we start back in the morning at 9 I believe okay we have a session at 11 all right thank you brother Tom couple things

before we thank you a couple things before we go tonight aren't you glad he didn't turn out to be a fired-breathing dragon I'm just so excited about that what a what a wonderful gift to just solidify this foundation of grace

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