

Holy Ghost or Bust

by Jim Cymbala

The sermon emphasizes the importance of preaching the gospel and knowing what it is, rather than adding to or taking away from it.

Duration: 54:39

Scripture: John 14:26, Acts 2:4, Acts 4:31, 1 Corinthians 2:4, Galatians 5:16, Ephesians 5:18

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the need for preachers to rely on the power of the Holy Spirit in their preaching, rather than on human wisdom or eloquence. It shares a personal experience of a divine intervention during a church service, highlighting the importance of being sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit in ministry. The speaker encourages a shift towards preaching with deep conviction and a demonstration of the Holy Spirit's power to bring about true transformation and spiritual growth.

Transcript

My secretary told me she was talking to folks at Calvary Chapel and they said the conference address was business casual. And I said, are you sure? They said no, they said business casual. So this is business casual, but that's not what that is out there.

You'd just all be chilling, huh? It's a joy to be here. I love you guys, I'm hearing you sing and prayed for you this afternoon. I want to bring a word of encouragement and strengthening to you.

My wife and I have been at the Brooklyn Tabernacle for a long time. We started just so that you can understand how I might understand what you're going through wherever you're at. The first offering I took was \$85, was the total tithes and offerings.

We were in a rundown building in downtown Brooklyn on Atlantic Avenue. It was so depressing that I didn't want to go and I was the pastor, which is usually not a good sign. Lots of trouble, lots of problems that we inherited.

Two or three, four people sometimes on the Tuesday night prayer meeting, which is now attended by sometimes almost 2,000 people. And on Sunday, just weather bad, then you could have 10, 12, 14, 15 people. I hadn't been trained to be in the ministry, hadn't gone to Bible school, was an all-city basketball player in New York and went to college on a hoop scholarship, played in the NCAA tournament.

And so I was going through a lot of battles, especially at the beginning. My sermons were so bad, I fell asleep while I was preaching. But you know, you preach, you pray, and you applaud.

That's how the work of the Lord is done when you're leaders. You preach, you pray, you applaud. You applaud, you pray, you preach.

You just keep moving ahead and you don't give in to discouragements. I want to talk to you about something we all do, all of us do, what I want to talk about, and that's preach or deliver God's Word. The first rule, of course, of preaching is you can never imitate anyone, which I don't want to talk about, but I just want to say that before we get to this passage.

The moment you imitate anyone, you're doomed to little fruit, little success, because God never uses copycats. Maybe this will help someone here. When I first went in the ministry, the biggest struggle I had was that God could use me speaking conversationally like I do now.

I thought, no, I'm a pastor, I'm in the ministry, I didn't think this would work out this way, so let me be a preacher. That's death. So I would conjure up pictures in my mind of what a preacher would be, or somebody who influenced my life, or a former pastor when I was a college student and whatnot, and I just had the biggest battle to break through to believe that God could use me the way I am.

And if you're here today, I just want to encourage you, God will use you just the way you are. You never affect anything, you don't act, you don't be mystical, don't be like somebody else, don't get all hollering if that's not your temperament, don't put a tear in your voice. Anything that's not real, the Holy Spirit, who's the spirit of truth, he withdraws quickly because if he wants to show, he'll go to Broadway.

But in church, in church, there should be no show. We should be who we are. Jesus never had two voices.

He never said to the guys, well, look, we're going to go across the lake, get the food ready, but I've got to do this Beatitudes thing here on the mountain and talk to them. And then he turned and they changed his voice or his personality and went, praise God, hallelujah, and all of that. That is death.

But some of us, and unfortunately in Christianity, that's developed into part of the culture so that we expect that from people, but that's unthought of for the Apostle Paul, unthought of for Jesus Christ. There was only one voice, only one personality, had no preacher persona. He was just who he was.

So I just want to say that. I battle with that. And then God helped me to break through and show me you only, I'll only use you when you're who you are.

Stop trying to be someone else. Just get over it and be who you are and do your best and speak from your heart. But I want to talk now about a more spiritual aspect of preaching.

When people get saved, by the accident of how they get saved, they get influenced by the environment of where they got saved. Nobody, when they're smoking weed all day long or doing Oxycontin, nobody says, oh, when I get saved I want to be a Baptist. Nobody does that.

When you get saved, you find Christ, you end up in a church. You didn't ask for it. It's just the way it happened.

You know, some of you ended up in Calvary Chapel. I ended up where I was. You know, there's just, when you study church history, a lot of stuff going on over there all through the centuries.

I was with my friend Rabi Zacharias in Hong Kong where I've been back several times and with underground pastors there by the hundreds from the mainland. And they have their style of the way they pray and the way they sing. And they don't copy anyone because they're not in touch with anybody.

But whatever environment you're saved in, you get a lot of definitions, not from the word of God. You get your earliest definitions, like when you grow up, you get your definitions from the environment around you. So when people say prayer, you don't know, you don't search the scripture to find out what prayer is at first.

You go, yeah, I know what prayer is. They do it in the church. Evangelism, the gospel even.

There's all kinds of ministers being frustrated in America today because they grew up in a church that didn't preach the gospel. A little bit of Jesus was in there, a little gospel, but not, I say to all of you gentlemen, something I did years ago and I still do it and it was, oh, it was life changing for me. Just read through every sermon in the book of Acts where they preach the gospel and make sure that's what you and I are preaching.

Peter in Acts 2, Peter in Acts 3, Peter in Acts 10 at Cornelius' house, Paul in Antioch, Pisidia, Acts 13, when they almost kill him in Acts 21, 22, 20 in Jerusalem. That's the gospel that's the power of God to salvation, not any other gospel. If you put additives in it, if you add to that, you dissipate its power.

If you take away from it, you dissipate its power. God doesn't need creative thought from any of us here in this room. He's God.

And he told us, go into all the world and preach the gospel, the good news. But what is the good news? If you came up on an accident on the highway and the EMS people said the guy's got about two, three minutes to live and he's breathing his last and you only had three minutes to talk to him, what would you tell him to make sure his soul could be saved? We got to know what the gospel is. And in America, we've added, join the church.

Our denomination is special. And then none of that is have anything to do with the gospel. Nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing.

Pentecostal distinctives, nothing, nothing. None of that is mentioned anywhere in the sermons when Peter and Paul and others were trying to reach people with the gospel. Is that part of the new covenant? Yeah, we can discuss that in believers meetings and all that.

But when we want to see people converted, where I am, I'm surrounded by this huge world of people who don't know Jesus. It's getting worse in downtown Brooklyn. And we got to preach that, that gospel, which is the power of God to salvation.

So that's the subject matter. And if I could just add one more thing, you got to make sure that I suggest to you that you got to make sure that in every service you preach the gospel, some part of the new covenant. Now your movement is known for expository preaching through the books of the Bible.

And that's great. I started in January, which I don't always do, but I started in January and first Thessalonians. And I'm still there just ending chapter two now.

And we're in May. And and no, that's the truth. And I'm making my way through it.

But God is making things real to me and I'm trying to do my best to preach it. But that's easy because there's nothing but Jesus and the new covenant in first Thessalonians. But when you do an Old Testament book, please don't get hung up on Elijah or Moses or Mount Sinai.

It has no power, no power. Get to Jesus quickly. He's the name that's above every other name.

The demons don't tremble when you say holy, holy, holy or creator God or Jehovah or anything like that. It's Jesus that stirs up that hornet's nest. Come on.

Let's say amen to that. So let me say something else. He he is the image of the invisible God.

Only he is. God wanted us to know what he's like. He sent his son.

You can't take this verse and that verse and create an image of God. Martin Luther, the reformer, said any other picture of God outside of the face of Jesus is of the devil. Jesus is the face of God.

You want to know what God feels about women? Look at Jesus or children or anything else. And I lament sometimes doing study going the Old Testament, as Moody said, the moody, the evangelist, that he preached sermons. And if someone was there who didn't know the Lord, they would have never known how to get saved because he got so caught up in the context of King Ahab and Jezebel and Elijah and all of that.

That's not the covenant we're preaching. When Elijah got through with the prophets of Baal, he went into the valley and slaughtered 450 of them. That has nothing to do with us.

We don't live that way. We're to pray for our enemies. The Muslims are not our enemies.

They're our mission field. We try to reach them. So make sure we have our covenants right and we get to Jesus, because that's so important because of what I'm about to say.

That's where the Holy Spirit comes and helps us. Remember, Jesus said, when he comes, he will glorify me. If I preach Jim Simba, look, this microphone's a drug.

Let's talk straight. It can be a drug. I know pastors in New York, they don't care that they've had 40 people for the last 20 years, as long as they can hear themselves preach every Sunday, they're happy.

Just hear themselves and pontificating and it's just all talk and smack. But if I project Jim Simba through some subtle way tonight, the Holy Spirit will withdraw because he was never sent to glorify Jim Simba. If I try to promote the Brooklyn Tabernacle, he withdraws again.

That has nothing to do with his mission. He's not sent to glorify the Brooklyn Tabernacle or Calvary Chapel or the assemblies of God. He was sent only to glorify one person, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And when you and I glorify Christ in our preaching, it draws the Holy Spirit's power and help. So we have to make sure now that we're preaching the message that God sent us at the cost of his own son to propagate. The good news of Jesus, the cross, the blood, the promised Holy Spirit, his second coming.

We got to get to that in every service. Otherwise, how will people know how to get saved? You can't get them saved in the life of Elijah. Jesus wouldn't have come if Elijah would have done it.

So yes, can we jump off and see types and shadows and all that good stuff? Yes, all scripture is inspired by God, but we got to get to Jesus. All in favor say aye. Well, that's good.

Now let me read this verse to you. The first letter that Paul ever wrote chronologically in his life was 1 Thessalonians. That's the earliest of his letters.

Not that way in scripture, but it's the first one chronologically. And in verse 4 of chapter 1, he says, for we know brothers and sisters loved by God that he has chosen you because our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction. Listen, because our gospel, because there were other ones like there are today, came to you not simply with words.

I wasn't a preacher. I wasn't just a communicator, but also with power, dunamis, where we get our word dynamite, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction. Now I was telling you, attention here please, I was telling you that we get our definitions on a lot of things by the church as we grow up and then nowhere is that more prevalent for us that we have to be aware is by the word preaching, preacher, preaching.

Most of us don't study the scripture to say when God said go and preach, what did he mean by preaching? Maybe the apostles would come back and see a lot of the stuff we're doing now and go, what are you all doing? That's not what he sent us out to do. So it's been fascinating to me to try to humble myself and submit to scripture and say, God, teach me how to do everything, lead the people in prayer. You know, who is sufficient for these things, Paul said, but God has made us competent ministers of the new covenant, not of the old for the letter kills, only the spirit gives life.

And nowhere else is this more important than in this word preaching. So let's go back and God help us to just empty ourselves of misconceptions and preconceptions. Paul says now, amazing what he did in Thessalonica.

Some of the commentators believe he could have been there a shorter period of time as three or four weeks. Most all say he couldn't have been there more than three or six months. He had come from Philippi.

How he got to Philippi was through the Macedonian call that he got in a vision at night. He leaves Thessalonica with a church. How do you do that? No New Testament, no written scriptures, no sound systems, no buildings, the Roman government against them, Jewish leaders against them.

And he left a church. Now that's the bomb. Am I right or wrong? Would you like to be back there and say, how did he pull that off? And we got multiple translations and every kind of thing, and we're still complaining.

And he just said, no, this is how I roll. This is what I do. I come, I preach the gospel, and I start churches.

I'd love to have been back there. Well, he's gone for about a year now, and he's worried about his believers. All shepherds, if they're true, are always thinking about their sheep, their spiritual growth, their condition.

As he says in this letter, what else do we have? When Christ comes, what else do you have? He says, what is my glory? What is my joy? What is my crown that I glory in? What is my hope? Is it not you? All you and I have to show God when he returns is not just, I'm still trusting you, serving you, but then people, people that we've led to Christ, people that we've disciplined, people that we've encouraged, people who

are ready to fall away, and we help them. That's all we have. Years ago, I wrote a book.

First book I wrote, Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire. And it won book of the year, like two years after it was out. And no, it's true.

They printed just a few copies every printing. I have more printing dates for that book than the King James Bible. They would print like 2,000 for the whole country.

And then it sold, and it sold, and then they said, well, now we'll start printing. It was a philosophy they had back then. But anyway, it won book of the year.

I didn't go to the award ceremony, but they sent me a certificate, book of the year, Christian book of the year. So when Christ returns, what am I going to show him? My certificate for book of the year? He wrote the Bible. He's not impressed by Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire.

All right? So what do we have? We have people. We have people. That's why you have to lay awake at night, pray for them, intercede, seek God with them, weep over them, rebuke some, correct some.

That's all we have. All the buildings are going to be burnt up. No denominational names left, just us and Jesus and who we can bring with us.

So now, how did he do that? It must have been in this. He says to them, now when I was with you, you remember that my, our gospel came to you not in word only but in power, in the Holy Spirit and with great conviction, deep conviction. Let's just look at that and then let's pray ourselves.

So he says, notice our gospel. Already there were other gospels. Brothers, sisters, brothers and sisters that are here, we got to be strong in knowing what the gospel is.

If you turn on Christian television, nine out of ten programs are just, there's no gospel. It's either some modern thing, no mention of sin, no mention of the cross. It's the pastor as life coach.

You know, how to make friends and keep them. Good grief. Guy is sticking needles in his arm and you're telling him about how to make friends.

Is there a time for that? But that's not the gospel. We got to know what that gospel is. Notice he says, our gospel, that good news.

You got to know it, brothers. Listen, you got to know it. Read those sermons and say, have I added to what Peter and Paul were preaching? Have I taken anything away? Some don't want to mention sin, so there's no repentance.

Just believe on, sometime not even on Jesus, just believe in God. That is not the gospel, to believe in God. It's believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And it's to repent of your sin. No, you can't mention sin. They might not come back.

That's not our job, to build large audiences. God never called any of us to have a large church. We have maybe now 10,000 people coming in a week to our church.

God never called my wife and I to have large numbers. Told us to preach the gospel. He'll take care of changing people.

But if you compromise, you could end up, who knows that Laodicea, which was lukewarm, and the Lord was going to vomit them out of his mouth, they might have been running more than any of the other churches in the book of Revelation chapters two and three. It's not numbers, it's, do they really know the Lord? Do they love his word? Do they love Jesus? So he said, when we came to you, our gospel, to differentiate it from all the scam artists, or there are some swindlers there. You know, it's hard to watch Christian television.

There's so many con artists, so many, selling Holy Ghost oil for \$10 a pint, or whatever they're selling it for, and selling prayer shawls, and all kinds of black magic related philosophies, that a physical object would make a difference in your life. And the people are so biblically illiterate, they're sending money into these characters. Am I wrong or right here? So, that's wrong, though.

That is totally, absolutely wrong, what they're doing. So Paul says, our gospel, he didn't want anything from the people. While he was there, he worked with his own hands as a tent maker, so that he wouldn't be a burden to them, even though he had the scriptural right to get support from them.

But that's what you do when you're in love with your spiritual children. You don't scam them, you don't take advantage of them, you don't show yourself as somebody great. You get under and try to help them, because they need encouragement.

So he says, my preaching, our gospel, our message, did not come in word only. So now we know, you can have word only preaching, and you can have another kind of preaching. That's for all of us.

It is what it is. He said, I didn't come in word only, but my gospel came to you when I preach with power, with the Holy Spirit, and with great conviction. Brothers, we got to pray that God gives us more power when we preach, because Satan has power.

Don't ever mock the devil and make a joke that he's nothing. In that letter, Paul says, I wanted to come to you many times, but Satan blocked my path. He never says how, but Satan must be heavyweight and have power, but greater is he that's in us.

But we got to have a manifestation of God's power when we preach. There's got to be something that breaks down the strongholds in people's minds. They've been lied to.

They've been told there is no God. They're clinging to their sins. They'll fight you tooth and nail not to give up their sin.

Do you think a clever joke and three points and a conclusion is going to cut it in the day we live in? I don't know where you all live. It won't in Brooklyn. We need power when we preach.

Notice a couple times in the book of Acts, Peter, full of the Holy Spirit, said this or that. Power, positional truth can get us in a lot of trouble. All Christians have the Holy Spirit in us.

I got that. But not all believers and not all ministers and not all churches are full of the Holy Spirit and His power. Of course not.

How would Laodicea be vomited out of the Lord's mouth if it was full of the Holy Spirit? Why is one of the qualifications for the seven in Acts 6, 4, call them deacons or whatever, why is one of the qualifications? They had to be men known to be full of the Holy Spirit and power, wisdom. So we got to spend less time

sometimes getting our text and our notes together and more time waiting before God and say, God, fill me with power. You know, this is no, I'm not telling you how to do anything.

But about five and a half years ago, six years ago, the Lord dealt with me. I had a visitation of the Lord in my study where I was living then and he came to me and I was at just empty. My tank was empty.

So I just locked myself away for seven, eight hours that day to be with the Lord. Carol was gone and I just went up the attic floor with a Bible, some books around me and just said, I'm not leaving here until you help me. You got to do that sometimes.

Otherwise you run on nervous energy and it's not going to cut it. So I went up there about a quarter to 10, 10 o'clock or something, came out of there at six something. Somewhere in there, I felt the Lord visit me and just, I mean, it was just awesome.

And one of the things the Lord made real to me at that time was don't preach anymore with notes. I preach all my life with notes. Nothing wrong with preaching with notes.

But for me, God dealt with me. Okay. I don't want you preaching anymore.

So with notes. So for the last six, six and a half years, I think it is. I don't have any notes.

I have nothing to fall back on. But God, if I lose my place, God got to help me. But it's good for me because I make less points.

I'm making more points to you because you're pastors and you know the Bible as well or better than me. But to the average audience in New York City, you can't make too many points because every point you make in your message makes the last point you made less powerful. The way God has made the mind is that the more points you make, the less power each one has.

Nobody can feel deeply about seven things. That's funny. When you hear a preacher say point nine, you know, no, no, that's not going to happen.

No, no, I'm out of here. But what it's made me do is spend more time with the Lord because without him helping me, I don't know my application at the end. I don't know what examples I'll give.

Like right now, he has to help me. I'm not telling you how to preach, but we got to get with the Lord more and say, Lord, show me how you want me to preach. You can't copy Chuck Smith.

You can't copy some minister that you like. God didn't call you to do that. God called you to be you.

Get with the Lord and say, God, how do I do this? I want more fruit. Don't you want more fruit? How many want more fruit in their churches and ministries? Why are we doing this? To have fruit. What glorifies the Father? Jesus said, this glorifies the Father, that you go out and bear much fruit.

But we need power to do that. I'm not talking about working up stuff, screaming in the mic. I'm not talking about any kind of setting of mood and all of that.

I'm talking about Holy Spirit power. Remember in Acts 4, after the first persecution of the church, the disciples prayed this prayer. The leaders prayed this prayer.

Now, Lord, enable your servants to preach your word boldly, as you stretch out your hand to do wonders in the name of your Holy Son, Jesus. The point is this. If God isn't working with us when we preach, what are we going to accomplish? I'm not some wild-eyed charismatic.

I'm trying to be a New Testament pastor. Without God's helping me in downtown Brooklyn, I don't have a chance. Yeah, prepare the message.

Yeah, do the best you can. But God, you got to come. He said, my message was not in word only.

We're dying in the Christian church because of communicators. They're killing us. Smooth-tongue communicators like you have with Apple computer and in corporate America.

They have the gift of communicating, and they're interesting, but that's not how the church is supposed to be built. It's supposed to be built the way Paul preached. My gospel came to you not in word only.

I didn't dazzle you with footwork. It came with power. You knew God was alive.

Wouldn't you like to have been there when he preached? So God's got to work with us, and I have every right to ask him. You have every right to ask him, Lord, I'm delivering the message about your son, and now you're not going to work with me through some sign, some sense, some something? God, you have to do it in power and in the Holy Spirit who gives that power. We have to be charged by the Holy Spirit when we preach.

We got to be led. You know Spurgeon, the great Baptist preacher in England at Metropolitan Tabernacle. Now listen to what he said.

I never stay too close to my notes because who knows what light the Holy Spirit might give me on the subject while I'm preaching. Most of us just got my notes, know what I'm going to say, point one, point two, point three, conclusion. Spurgeon was saying, yeah, I know what I want to say.

I use notes, which is great, but he said, who knows while I'm preaching the Holy Spirit could show me something I never saw before. How many believe God can still do this? Just lift your hand. Well, of course.

We got to pray it. We got to pray it. We got to get out of the box of being the kind of preachers we've been in the past.

In the Holy Spirit, not in word only, but in power, in the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction. The Greek construction there probably means not only the conviction it produced in the listeners, but the conviction the preacher had. When the Holy Spirit helps us to preach, He helps us to feel the subject deeply.

And I can only speak for New York. I can only speak for my experience. They always know if you're preaching or if you feel it.

If you preach something that's true biblically, but it hasn't been made alive by the Holy Spirit, you can pick it up in a second. Yeah, it's true, but Paul says it came with deep conviction, not just in you, in me. To preach, this is what, you know, G. Campbell Morgan or someone said, to re-preach a sermon is very difficult because you think that there's magic in the notes.

You know, I preached that before. Woo, this is good. I got some duds, but this baby is working here.

Now, you're not trusting in God. You're trusting in the sermon you once preached. So, we got to get along with God and say, God, rework this message.

It's about love, about prayer, whatever. The second coming of Christ, make it real again to me. Otherwise, I'm going to get up and be parroting words from my first sermon.

Deep conviction. You're going to teach on giving. God's got to work out about your own giving.

You're going to preach on humility. God's got to break us again and humble us. Otherwise, yeah, it's true, but a lot of stuff are true, but it still puts people to sleep.

It's true, but it's not a lie. Are you following me? Say amen if you are. So, he said, my preaching was not with word only, but with power and the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction.

Let me close by saying this so we can pray. How about this? Do you know of any seminary? I know my friend Raul Reese is here. My friend Joe from Philadelphia is here.

They're knowledgeable men. I don't know one seminary that teaches preaching this way. First Corinthians chapter 2 verse 4. Listen.

For my message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words. Well, that's the whole point, isn't it? To be wise and persuasive. Paul said no.

I was not wise and persuasive. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the power of the Holy Spirit. So that your faith would not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

I have no myself, no seminary, and I got a lot of influential friends and have traveled all around the world. I hardly can, maybe mainland China is an exception because without that they don't have a whole, because half of them that I spoke to one of the times I was there had all been in jail for Christ, and I'm speaking to them. I felt so unworthy.

Wise and persuasive words. No. Holy ghosts are bust.

God, you got to come and help us. A demonstration of the power of the Holy Spirit. Now, nowhere does that indicate every four minutes, six minutes, Paul could say, bring up that lame person, bring that blind person and heal them.

That wasn't the demonstration. There's no healings and miracles on call or by order or matter of fact, anywhere found in the New Testament. Even Jesus couldn't do that.

He can only do what the father showed him. He had to raise every dead person. He only raised the dead people the father showed him to raise.

There's the sovereignty of God in all of that somehow. But he said a demonstration of the power of the Holy Spirit. So I'm going to go out on the here.

You know how my style of preaching, I just told it to you. So I want to tell you something. Maybe some of you are cessationists.

Some of you are whatever your position is about that. I'm just going to tell you and you can judge whether it's true and how the Lord, I felt just brought it to my mind. So one Sunday, you know, because I want to, I want to preach better.

I want to lead services better. I want to do what God wants me to do. Don't you want to do that? I don't want to be some mechanical preacher.

You put money in their head and they get, you get a sermon. I've met people like that over the years. Just give them that honorarium and they'll give you a sermon.

I don't want that. My wife and I've never wanted that. Honest.

Don't want that. I want to see people change. And oh my, have we seen thousands of people change.

So one Sunday afternoon, I was doing at that time, I was just talking with Pastor Joe, nine, 12, three, and six, four services every Sunday, each two hours long. That was brutal. Six years, we were looking for a new facility.

We were in a large theater, turning people away. Now we got a theater that seats almost 4,000 people and in downtown Brooklyn, which is undergoing a real Renaissance. So this is years ago.

And my wife, I'm sitting, I'm sitting like over there and the choir is behind. She has a great big choir, one, six Grammy awards and all that stuff. They're good.

And they're just average people, but they really love the Lord. She's directing them. And she gets through with the song and I'm sitting there and I had eaten some food, which I don't do anymore.

I just have like a shake during the day. Now we have three services, nine, 11, and one. And I was a little loggy.

I wasn't alert. And the song ended and she just stands there, brothers. She just stands there and lifts her hands.

And suddenly the strangest thing happened. The choir started to worship God. No one told anyone to worship God or anything.

This was being controlled somehow by the spirit invisibly. And a sound started in the audience. Some people lifted their hands, maybe one or two stood, mostly were still sitting.

And it wasn't quiet, but it wasn't real loud either. But it was just this hum of people, praise you, Jesus, hallelujah. We love you, Lord.

And she didn't move. She just kept her hands up. So I knew she must've felt there's some divine reason here to just pause.

You can't run a meeting on a script. Okay? You can, but say goodbye to the Holy Spirit. He's not going by your script or my script.

He's the Holy Spirit. He's put in charge of the church. It just was some place now at a huge conference and they had me in the green room.

They're going over the meeting. Okay. So Pastor Jim, you're going to preach.

We're going to introduce you. Bob, you introduce him. So here's how we begin.

We're going to have praise and worship. First two songs that's set. It's going to be 11 minutes.

Okay? Then we're going to have a video. It's two minutes and 40 seconds. Okay.

Then you're going to come up, make that announcement about the youth that you have a minute and a half. Okay. So then we're going to take the offering.

Harry, don't pray so long for the offering. You went a little longer last time. Okay.

And then after the offering, the choir is going to do some patriotic thing. And then this Bob, you're going to introduce Pastor Cymbala and you have a minute to do it. You have your notes and all that.

And so I just said, why don't you just say my name? I'll get out there. And it really, I don't need any introduction. No, no, we're going to do it.

So, okay. So we got it all set. Now, Jim, when we walk out there, you got to all sit together down at the same time, you know, you can't just be sitting, you know, you got to sit together.

So just check on your right and on your left. And when we walk out there, we kind of just like, you know, synchronize our sitting. It's very important in a Christian meeting that you learn to all go like that.

So anyway, they go through all of this nonsense. And then the guy says, no, but wait a minute before we go out, let's pray. So I go, yeah.

So guy lifts his voice. I'm sure he meant it, but he didn't realize how ludicrous it was. Open the heavens, God, and come down and reveal yourself.

Where? How could he do that? There's no time. There's no allotment for him to do that. How could he do that? So I just say that, listen, if you want to follow the Holy Spirit, it's hard, it's difficult, and you can make mistakes.

But I'd rather have that than sterile church. Predictable church? Ooh, yucky. So Carol's just standing like that.

And I get up from my seat, because this has gone on for like a minute, minute or more. That's a long time in the service, right? To just not know like, what are we doing here? No one has said, let's praise God, let's sing. No one's saying anything.

So I go up as God is my holy witness as I tell you this. I take the microphone, I close my eyes, and I realize I can do whatever I want now. I'm the pastor, I have the microphone.

I can say, no, I can say, sit down and stop it. I can lead in a chorus and take it another way. That's what you have every meeting.

We're making decisions that affect the service. And if you believe in just run the routine and do the script, that's fine, then you just do that. I wasn't in that mood, because I knew God was doing something, the best I could sense.

The choir's praising God behind me, the audience is like, some are bowing their heads, others are, I don't know, there's this noise, this hum. So at that pulpit, I'm thinking of my alternatives. And then I say to the Lord, God, I don't want to do any of those.

I want to do what you want me to do. I'll sit here, I'll stand here and do nothing until you show me what to do. I got desperate.

There was something happening, but I didn't know what it was. I didn't know what was supposed to happen next. This might seem ridiculous to some of you, but I'm just telling you what happened.

So I closed my eyes, I'm just holding the mic, and people are praising God. It's not real loud, but it's not quiet. And suddenly, the Lord, I felt, directed my attention to a woman sitting in the front row, just with her hands up, standing.

And I felt the best I could feel. The Lord spoke to me and said, hand the microphone to her. That's the craziest thought I ever had in my life.

That's the devil, I thought, trying to tempt me to do something. No, no. What are you laughing at everything for? No, sometimes when you want to follow God, Satan will tempt you to do something weird, because people think weird things are spiritual.

Some weird things are just weird, right? Am I right? But I knew when I thought, no, I can't do that. She doesn't want the mic. How would I get her the microphone? And no, I can't, but oh, horrible feeling inside.

And it was as if the Lord was saying, did you not just pray what you should do? So I just told you what to do, get her the mic. Now, I am basically shy, and I don't like to do things that are weird to try to like, put on some spiritual show. Do you get what I'm saying about? I'm talking now to you from my heart.

I think a lot of you are like me. We want God, but we don't want fake. Amen? But I had to do it.

I knew it. I've never done anything like that before or since. So I remember myself, excuse me, I have a bone bruise on the bottom of my right foot from playing paddle ball or something.

And I start walking off there, and I can, the heart, my heart's pounding. Because again, there's this noise, they're praising God. And I'm coming off the steps, and now I'm going to approach her.

Her eyes are closed. She just has her hands up in the air. This is the most illogical, crazy thing.

And I felt as I'm approaching her, may I put my hand on her arm to just not scare her and let her know like, should I like say, do what you feel or what should I do? I'm handing her the microphone. I'm a foot from her. And before I can reach out the mic, I'm just lowering it.

She grabs it. And begins to prophesy. And gives a word from the Bible, but inspired.

And begins to say what the Lord wanted to tell the congregation to encourage us and help us. It was so powerful, I just fell on the seat sitting next to her. It was overwhelming.

As she was speaking, people started flying to the altar. The people started falling on their faces. All heaven broke loose in that place.

And she's just delivering this word. Nothing new, no new revelation. Just, you know, a word from the Lord for the church.

But it had that ring. You know, the old camp meeting people at the end of the 19th century, 1890s, they said about a sermon, you know, when God does something and a preacher preaches, it has a ring to it. When it's really of God.

So that even a blind person, if they hear a silver dollar fall on the cement, they'll know, that's not a nickel, that's not a dime. I can tell by the sound. This had that sound.

Oh, my goodness. Oh, my goodness. For the next 40 minutes, we're gone.

We're off to the races with Jesus. People are praying, calling on God, praying for each other, repenting. Listen, God the Holy Spirit can get more done in five minutes than five of our sermons when they're not filled with the Holy Spirit.

So she gets done. Somehow order comes back in the sense of, I went, okay, a lot's happened already. I'm not going to try to preach a sermon.

We're going to take the offering, and then I want to just exhort you for a few minutes. Every sermon had to be the same. You can't show me that format in the scripture.

So service is over. I go up to a place, they let me rest, get ready for the next service, do the fourth one, then go home. Monday, we're off.

Tuesday, I'm in the office, and her husband walks into me who was on staff and said, was that a service pastor on that afternoon service? God blessed us all day, but was that a visitation of the Lord? And by the way, what I'm talking about is not some wild stuff. Seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. The history of all revivals, the whole Welsh revival was run on a kind of meeting no one had ever seen, but God was there.

The word was honored, Jesus was proclaimed, and there was fruit. So I said, yeah, the Lord was really there. He was gracious.

He said, you know, driving home with my wife, I said to her, you know, honey, God really used you. She's quiet, humble. She went, well, thank God.

He said, I want to ask you something. How did you get the microphone? And she said, you know, while we were all waiting, and Carol was just standing there, I began to feel this word from scripture that the church needed to hear. But my voice is so quiet, and I wouldn't just shout it out, because I wasn't sure, is this really of God? I don't want to be out of order.

So I began to pray, God, if this is really you, make him walk off the platform and hand me the microphone. So my preaching and my message, Paul says, was not in word only. There's things God wants to do in all of our churches that maybe we've never experienced before.

If you've already got them in a box, there's no hope for any of us. I'm not talking about wild, extra biblical stuff. Listen, I love the Bible as much as any of you.

I don't want wildfire, but I don't want an iceberg for a church either, where it's so predictable and there's no life to it. Let me just add one last thought that I'm sharing with some of the leaders here of your movement. Without a visitation of the Holy Spirit, people who come to our churches will find some ways to indulge the flesh through drinking, partying, and all kinds of stuff, and use even scripture to back it.

Only a visitation of the Holy Spirit burns the holiness of God in you. No preacher can do that. That's why his name is Holy Spirit.

Without the Holy Spirit, we're hopeless. Do I get an amen here? Christianity is hopeless without the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, I'm going to send you another comforter.

I've been with you, but he's going to be in you. Now, greater things are going to happen if we let him have his way in our preaching. Let's close our eyes.

God, we want to preach different. We want to preach better. I thank you for all the times you've helped my friends here, my brothers, all the times you've helped us in the past.

I thank you, but we say we want more. We want more, Lord. We want more, more of your spirit, more power with deep conviction, with a demonstration of the power of the Holy Spirit so people's faith will not stand in the wisdom and the cleverness of the preacher, but in the power of God.

I repent, and I ask you to forgive me for every sermon I've ever preached where I really didn't wait before you. I really didn't ask you to fill me. I just went out trusting in some line of thought that I had for some passage, but we draw a line in the sand today.

Calvary Chapel and me, we draw a line in the sand today, Lord. No more preaching like that. We're going to preach in the power of the Holy Spirit.

We're going to preach with deep conviction. We're going to bear fruit so that your name is glorified. There'll be conviction of sin.

We won't be harsh and judgmental, but we'll tell the truth as it is in Jesus. We need you tonight, Lord. Would you just list your hands up to heaven with me? I need thee.

Oh, I need thee every hour. I need thee. Oh, bless me now, my Savior.

I come. Sing it again from your heart. I need thee.

Oh, I need thee every hour. I need thee. Oh, bless me now, my Savior.

Here's what I'm going to ask you to do. There's obviously no room. There's so many of you.

In a moment, I'm going to ask you to stand, and I'm going to ask everybody, if there's women here, they can get a female partner, but all the rest of us men, I want you to get one partner, face him, join hands together. One of you pray out loud for the guy you're holding hands there, then he's going to pray for you. And I want nothing else to be heard in this building except praying out to God.

God, give us a new kind of preaching style. Don't you want it? How many say amen? A new effectiveness, a new... I want someone to pray with me. Someone's going to pray with me.

God, help Jim Cymbala. Help him to preach with power and the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction so that the people will be changed. Help us to preach the gospel with the power of God.

Everybody stand. Find a prayer partner. Come on.

And pray out loud. Pray out loud. Pray out loud.

Let that person know what you're praying.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/SYtI5EGS-w8.mp4>
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