

The Anointing of God

by Jim Cymbala

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being a competent minister of the New Covenant and seeking God's anointing and presence in ministry, in order to effectively reach people with the Gospel and bring about spiritual transformation.

Duration: 55:26

Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 2:7

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Gods Love"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of genuine love, compassion, and sensitivity in ministry, highlighting the need for pastors to have a heart of love for their congregation and those in need. It shares personal stories of transformation and conviction, illustrating the power of God's love to change lives and the necessity of being led by the Holy Spirit in ministry.

Transcript

And I want to thank all the folks over here who have been so gracious to my wife and I. In case you don't know anything about the Brooklyn Tabernacle or our ministry, 26 years ago my wife and I came to a run-down building in downtown Brooklyn, a depressing situation with less than 20 people in the church. The first offering I took on a Sunday morning was \$85. That was the total tithes and offerings for that service.

We were in the ghetto, inner city, drug and alcoholism all around us. But on top of that, I had never been to seminary. I was a basketball player in high school and college and came into the ministry in an unusual way, which I won't belabor now.

And my wife, although she's won two Grammy Awards now, my wife has never learned to read or write music technically. She's not trained, so she can't read or write the music that she's producing, where other people are singing it. So next to that verse in the Bible, God uses the foolish things of this world and the weak things.

My picture is right there in the Bible next to that verse along with my wife. Because God's not looking for talent. God's looking for availability.

God's not looking for geniuses because He knows everything already. The Lord is just looking for somebody who He can break and make and fill and use for His glory. So it's a real honor for us to be here.

We had four services yesterday in New York City, and we got on that airplane early this morning, but we really counted, as I said, an honor to be here to minister the Word of God. I'd like you to turn in your Bibles, if you would, to the book of 1 Thessalonians. And I want to read some portions of Scripture.

And if you don't mind, I'm going to ask you to read little clumps of verses because it's not one particular sentence I want to focus on, but it's an aroma, it's a fragrance, it's an atmosphere that I want to direct your attention to today. In 1 Thessalonians, the second chapter, Paul is talking about his ministry among the people there in Thessalonica. And we pick it up in verse 5 as he's reviewing his time with them.

You know, I'm reading from the NIV, you know that we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed. God is our witness. We were not looking for praise from men, not from you or anyone else.

As apostles of Christ, we could have been a burden to you, but we were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children. We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the Gospel of God, but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us. Then look down at verse 17, same chapter.

But brothers, when we were torn away from you for a short time, in person, not in thought, out of our intense longing, we made every effort to see you, for we wanted to come to you, certainly I, Paul, did again and again, but Satan stopped us. For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? Indeed, you are our glory and joy. So when we could stand it no longer, we thought it best to be left by ourselves in Athens, and we sent Timothy, who is our brother and God's fellow worker, in spreading the Gospel of Christ to strengthen and encourage you in the faith.

And then in the third chapter, verse 6, he's giving the account now of Timothy's return. But Timothy has just now come to us from you and has brought good news about your faith and love. He has told us that you always have pleasant memories of us and that you long to see us just as we also long to see you.

Therefore, brethren, in all of our distress and persecution, we were encouraged about you because of your faith, for now we really live since you are standing firm in the Lord. Now, ladies and gentlemen, brothers and sisters in the ministry, people on the platform, let's talk. We'll cut all the preacher's talk, and let's just cut to the chase because the hour is late here, and I want to really open my heart to you about something of real concern.

You know, this conference is so important, and what happens in each session is so important because the calling that we have and what we're involved in, we're not selling thumbtacks. We're not slinging hash somewhere. We have been entrusted with the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

If you're here in this building and you're involved in service for God, you have been entrusted by God, chosen before the foundation of the world, not because of anything in you, but just God's sovereign choice. You've been entrusted to carry the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the part of the vineyard where He's put you. And I want to remind all of you here today that at the end of your life, you and I are all going to stand at the judgment seat of Christ, and the quality of our work is going to be reviewed.

Why these sound guys and guys who are helping from the church, why they're really doing it. Are they doing it for a buck? Are they doing it to be noticed? Or are they doing it out of a real service for the Lord? The Bible says God's going to check and look into the motives of the heart. Why is Jim Simballa preaching? Why is he in the Brooklyn Tabernacle? What kind of preparation goes into those sermons? Why is he preaching? What's his relationship with those people? You're not going to be reviewed by your peers.

It won't matter who thinks you're hot. Your Sunday school numbers won't mean a bit of interest to God because He's not looking at quantity. One of the disturbing things about the ministry today is that when you talk to 99 out of 100 pastors and you say, how is your church doing? They talk about three things.

The attendance, the budget, and the plans. The attendance, how many they're running. The budget, how much money they're taking in and how big their building is and how extensive it is.

And none of those three things are mentioned in the New Testament. None of those three things are even mentioned. Our religion began meeting in caves and upper rooms.

In Jesus' seven letters to the church in Revelation we don't know what one of them was running on Sunday morning. It could have been Laodicea was running 4,000 but it didn't matter because they all were going to be vomited soon out of the Lord's mouth. Smyrna or one of those other churches might have been running only a faithful couple hundred but they were people who were really in tune with God.

God was reviewing not quantity or numbers. Big buildings God gives to cults. We know that by being here in this city.

Big buildings don't mean anything. Large amounts of money don't mean anything. God gives that to people who curse Him.

The Brooklyn Tabernacle is going to be reviewed. My ministry is going to be reviewed by what kind of people are in the Brooklyn Tabernacle. What are we making of the Christian church? And this is an awesome day that we live in because the church of Jesus Christ has been invaded by technicians.

Not men of God, not men of prayer, not men of the Scriptures but clever people. People who are better with computers than the Word of God and on their knees. And they have brought in a revisionist theology that has now revised what the church is.

And I want to remind all of you today nobody has a right to change the church of Jesus Christ. You didn't found it, Jesus founded it. You don't have to reinvent it, just do what the book says.

God doesn't need any creative thought. How many say amen? So the Bible tells us that days like this would come. Men have come in now and revised what the church is.

Instead of a spiritual organism they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' Doctrine and in the fellowship and in breaking of bread and in prayers. We have made it. How can you get people for one hour on Sunday morning into the building? That's a church.

I want to remind you tonight that's a meeting of people for one hour. And now is don't mention sin. Don't get anybody's face.

User-friendly, seeker-sensitive nonsense that will never wash when we stand before the one whose eyes are like fire. It's never going to wash when we stand before him. So what has happened, ladies and gentlemen, is we have this pathetic situation where pastors tell me they can't let the meeting run past an hour because everyone's looking at the clock.

They'll walk out even while you're serving communion to go home and watch an NFL game that's going to go on for three hours or an NBA game that's going to go on for three hours. And doesn't somebody think this is not what God intended when he started the church? I mean, doesn't that dawn on anybody that the people today don't want to be in the presence of God? They're shortening the meetings, shortening the meetings. Prayer meetings died out decades ago.

Sunday night services are going the way of high-button shoes. And we're hiding behind doctrinal statements and the fact that we've programmed these little Protestant masses for one hour and people come. But listen, trouble is looming.

When I played basketball, you didn't do it by faith. You had a scoreboard. And when you were playing for eight or nine minutes and if the score was 22 to six, the coach called a timeout and we'd go over there and nobody looked and said, Isn't this fun? We've got nice uniforms with gold trim.

The coach would say, We're going to change. We have to change. We're going to press or we're going to go into a zone press or we're going to run the ball or slow the ball down or go to man-to-man or do something.

But we're losing. So we change. We are now divorcing in the church at the same rate as outside the church.

The divorce rate is just as high. People professing Christ in the church as outside of the church. And last year, evangelical ministers divorced at the highest rate in history.

Church meetings are getting smaller and there's less mention of sin because pastors have yielded to, I've got to accommodate the lowest carnal denominator because some of these people give big money. And if I offend them by following the Holy Spirit and letting the meeting go too long or really step on their toes, they'll leave and my budget will go down. So I'm going to have to dance with them and sacrifice the teaching of the true word of God.

But brothers and sisters, I plead with you in the name of the Lord. Your work is not going to be reviewed by people. Your work is going to be, my work is going to be reviewed by the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

And we cannot compromise to keep the numbers up. I mean, what does it matter what the numbers are if the people don't want to be in the house of God? I talk to well-known ministers, well-known ministers who write books, who are famous, who tell me over a cup of coffee privately off the record, Jim, I couldn't have a prayer meeting in my church. Nobody would come.

They'll pay \$15 for a Christian concert, to hear a Christian singer, and for free they won't come into the presence of God and call upon the name of the Lord. For free. And yet every revival has been characterized by what? Great teaching, great puppeteering, eloquence? Never.

Prayer. When God's people, when his people begin to pray, something good begins to happen. And am I the only one embarrassed in America that's a minister when you hear ministers pressing these political buttons and saying, isn't it terrible we don't have prayer in schools? Are you kidding? We don't have prayer in the church.

The Bible, the Bible never indicates there was prayer in the Roman Empire in schools. But the early church seemed to be doing pretty good because they had prayer meetings in the church. Why should they pray in school? I'm all for prayer in schools.

But wouldn't it be better to begin in church? And wouldn't that say something about my ministry? Wouldn't that say something about anybody's ministry here? If the people don't want to be in the presence of God, how good could your sermons be? How sound is your doctrine? Your doctrine might be sound, but something's missing. Ladies and gentlemen, we're in a position now where people do not want to be in the house of God. But they're renting filthy videos, they're watching television hours on end, watching sports.

They know more about the Michael Jordan than the Apostle Paul. This is not the church that Jesus had in mind when he died on the cross. This is not the church described in the book of Acts.

And you can write me off as a fanatic, but I'm trying to stick with the word of God. Now, I've often asked the question, why would God send to people, why would God send to heaven the people in our churches when that's the last thing they want to do is be in his presence? No, I'm serious. I believe in justification by faith.

I know Reformation theology, but I'm asking you a question. If Mr. and Mrs. Jones are looking at the clock after one hour, one time a week, and then are going to go to their real life to do the things they really enjoy, why would heaven be heaven to them? Why would they want to be there? And why would God send them there? I think it's time for us to humble ourselves and look at some of these things. Because you know what? If I'm doing something wrong, I want God to break me now and change it.

I don't want to find out at the judgment seat of Christ that I was just building on puff. This American church system is so skewed that sometimes when we read the Bible, this is like a foreign element to us. Every time there was a crisis, they just gathered to pray.

And God would send His Holy Spirit and something wonderful would happen. So we live in a very challenging day right now. A very, very, very challenging day.

Because these revisionists have come in and are telling us that the numbers and the building and the budget means you're doing well when it doesn't mean you're doing well. All my wife and I will be able to present to the Lord is the quality of these people. Are they really hooked up and want to live holy lives? Are they living in the Word every day? Do they have an appetite for prayer? Are they really filled with the Holy Spirit? Are they lukewarm and ready to be vomited out of the mouth of the Lord? And I don't want my life to go to waste.

My wife and I are killing ourselves in New York City. Four meetings on Sunday each at least two hours long. Yesterday was a long day for me.

But I don't want to find out at the end of the day that I was building something that God say, Who asked you to build that? The people don't even know me. Who asked you to build that? Oh, well, I got that from the tradition I got growing up. I didn't ask you to do your tradition.

I asked you to do the Word of God. So, ladies and gentlemen, Paul's reference in 2 Corinthians 3 jumps out at me right now. He says, I don't need letters of recommendation from you or to you.

You're my letters of recommendation. I don't need credentials. You are.

What did he mean? You Christians are the result of my ministry. God wrote by the Holy Spirit, not with ink on the tablets of stone, but by the Holy Spirit in the tablets of your heart. God wrote through my ministry because He's made me a competent minister of the New Covenant.

I would say the greatest need today in America is for a revival to hit the ministry so that we would become competent ministers of the New Covenant, not of the letter that kills, but of the Spirit that gives life. In other words, from what I can ascertain, Paul would come into a place and had a ministry in God where he could take pagans with no Bibles, no New Testaments. He couldn't exegete.

The book of Hebrews hadn't been written yet. With no New Testaments, no money, no leverage with the government, no moral majority, none of that other stuff that we complain is the problem. Oh, that is, to me, it's ludicrous to say that Mr. Clinton or the Democrats or the Republicans are the problem.

What, or cults or demons, what could stand against a church that's full of Jesus Christ? How many believe that? Say amen. You don't, you don't see Paul, you don't see Paul complaining about Emperor Caligula or Nero in the New Testament. Let them do what they want to do, but let the church arise.

Let's be filled with the Spirit of God and the Word of God. So Paul was a competent minister of the New Covenant. That means that you can be an incompetent minister of the New Covenant.

By definition, if he said, God made me a competent minister, that means I could be an incompetent minister. I could mix law or Mickey Mouse organizational stuff instead of the pure Word of God and be an incompetent minister of the New Covenant and I could get people into the building, but not into God. Here's the problem in New York City.

How are you going to get a crack addict into God? Church won't change him. God has to change him. Competent minister of the New Covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit that gives life.

Somehow he led them into God where they opened their hearts and got filled with the Spirit and they were transformed. A lot of the preaching we do today is nothing but New Testament legalism or Old Testament Christianity. We're telling people what God's Word says and how many will come up and promise you're going to do it now, make a commitment, make a promise and promise you'll keep it.

That's not Christianity. Christianity is not a commitment religion. It's not a promise religion.

It's a supernatural religion. It's Christ in us, the hope of glory. It's God working in us both to will and to do according to His good pleasure.

So that brings me to this today that I would like to leave with you. I've been studying for a lot of years now God, how can I become a competent minister of the New Covenant? I don't want to be a preacher. I saw that growing up.

Manipulate the microphone and press buttons of what people want to hear and glad hand everybody and you can so easily become mechanical and worse than that. Just phony because you're running the church game. Just keep it going.

But how do you make a difference? And when God put my wife and I in downtown Brooklyn, that's not exactly the Bible belt. So I realized that I can't live with this song and dance that I heard growing up of people talking about what God once did in the Welsh Revival, what God once did in the Great Awakening or the Second Great Awakening or in Moody's meetings or Finney's meetings in upstate New York and all of that. Or I've heard sermons growing up about the great move of God that will come one day before Jesus comes.

But I've noticed that some men have been in the ministry 30, 40, 50 years and never seen a move of God. Talking about what once was and what once will one day be, but you know, your life can go by like that. And I figured, now why would God put my wife and I in downtown Brooklyn surrounded by all this need, surrounded by drug addicts, surrounded by pimps and prostitutes and straight people and crooked people and black and white and brown and yellow and red.

Why would God put us there? Just to hold a fort with 40 people? Or 20 people? No, there must be something better. I mean, what's that verse in Acts mean? And the hand of the Lord was with certain men from Cyprus and Cyrene when they went to Antioch. And the hand of the Lord was with them and multitudes turned to the Lord.

Knew nothing about Jesus. No Bibles. No press.

No choirs. Nothing. No church buildings.

No legal religion. How did they do that? I'd rather live just one year and see God's hand be with me than live 40 years and just be shuffling cards. Well, there's this from the life of Paul because Paul is our model as a preacher.

The Lord gives us so much about Him and the Word of God so that we can study about Him. And I think two things about Paul's life have been studied and analyzed a lot. First of all, Paul's message.

And that's important. Paul preached the Word. He told Timothy, Preach the Word.

Don't give people your opinions. Preach the Word. Don't go by novelties, pastors.

Preach the Word. There's all kinds of stuff out there being blamed on the Holy Spirit. When anybody tells you the Holy Spirit made them do something that's not in the Word of God, say bye-bye.

Because it has to be in the Bible. How many are with me? Say amen. The Word.

I was at a recent conference a couple years ago. In fact, part of it helped me instigate me to write this book, Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire. And I heard this technician, this minister saying that he has a new insight into demons and there's territorial spirits.

But if you get his books and learn his formula, you can bind the spirits for an entire city or an entire area. He said in this conference, Paul didn't even know how to do that. Oh, that got me mad when I heard that.

The New York came out in me. I was like, what? What did you just say? So I later sent a message to him. If you're so smart and you know all these things, why don't you come to New York and Chicago and do it? Just don't write books and sell it.

Do it. I'd like to learn. Dave Wilkerson and myself and a lot of other pastors, we're preaching and praying and flouting there in New York, asking God for a breakthrough.

But if you can just bind all the spirits by some formula, come and do it. Just don't write books. Do it.

That's when everyone gets quiet. But that's not in the Bible. If that was in the Bible, Paul would have told us.

He would have bound all the spirits in all those cities that were whooping him and throwing him in prison. But today we live in novelty. So I just want to remind you, let's follow what Paul's dictate is.

Preach the word. Preach the word. Let's understand law.

Let's understand gospel. Let's understand the difference between the old and the new covenant. Let's remember that the just shall live by faith, not by making promises.

We're supposed to lead people to trust, not to try. Number two, a lot of studies have been done on Paul's methodology. Not just his message, but his methodology and that's very illuminating to us because you can't follow his method.

You study the life of Jesus, you'll never know what he'll do next. If you would go up to Paul and say, how long are you going to stay here? How would he possibly know? No. Some ministers think it's the greatest thing in their computer to have a three-year plan.

Paul didn't even have a three-hour plan. He never knew when he would get arrested or when the spirit would call him someplace else or when he would get busted or thrown out of city or stoned. In other words, the methodology of the apostles was they were led by the Holy Spirit.

Don't you think we need a little bit of that in our churches today? Here, ladies and gentlemen, listen, there's never been a revival if you follow the bulletin. There's never been a revival if you follow the bulletin. How many, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait.

How many believe if God could lead the Israelites for 40 years, he could help us through one meeting? Say amen. In other words, what is with this over-organization like the Holy Ghost is dead? I'm not for emotionalism and shooting from the hip, but this is so unnatural. You go into church, no wonder people aren't getting converted.

It's not even the way anyone lives. If you came to my house, would I hand you a bulletin and tell you what we're going to do every five minutes? Oh, listen, some of the most wonderful things that have ever happened in our church have happened as we meet. We have a general outline, but we want to say, breathe on us, Holy Spirit.

Lead us. Show us what choruses to sing. Show us what songs, what hymns to sing.

Show us who should testify. And God, if I'm supposed to stop in the middle of the sermon, I'll throw my notes away. But lead us by your Spirit.

The earmark of every revival is the wind blows where it lifts. If you can't control God, you can't put him in a one-hour box and say, you've got one hour to work. You can't tell God what to do.

He tells you what to do. So, beside Paul's message and Paul's methodology, I want to get to what I think, though, is the missing thing. His message was the Word.

His methodology was led by the Holy Spirit. He had some goals, but even when he had goals, sometimes the Spirit of Jesus would forbid him and he couldn't go someplace. The Spirit of Jesus called him someplace else.

But that's where the power of God is. To trust Him. We're asking people to trust God with their lives.

We can't trust God with a meeting. Now, here's the real point, though. The missing element that came to me years ago on a hotel room floor in London was this.

We studied Paul's message and Paul's methodology, but the secret of his power and his ministry was in something else that not many people talk about, and that is his heart. In other words, when a woman gives birth to a baby, there's an umbilical cord and there's a lot of mess, but that's the way babies are born. And there's a bonding between a mother, especially, and the baby.

Dad, too, but especially the mom. And we have made the ministry so professional and so mechanical and three points and a poem and a clever thing and a polished thing, and then we're just punching these things out, but not too many folks are being changed. And one of the secrets of Paul, ladies and gentlemen, was that he had a baptism of love from God, even the love of Jesus Christ, like he showed on the cross, that was able to make Paul to be able to say things like this to the church at Thessalonica.

You remember when I was with you, I did everything. I worked day and night so I wouldn't be a burden to you. Tell me how many times you've heard pastors talk about their churches this way.

You can judge the accuracy of my remarks. For you remember when I was with you, I was like a mother nursing her baby. The picture in the Greek language is a mother taking down her dress and bringing the baby to her breast.

And the very life of the mother going into the baby. When I was among you, I wasn't some two-bit preacher giving you something and then looking for a check or a love offering. I was like a mother nursing a baby.

I wanted to give my very life to you. For he said, I wasn't ready to just give you the gospel. I was ready to go down for you.

I was ready to give you my life. How many of us have that kind of relationship with our congregations? I meet a lot of ministers who their congregations are like a burden to them or a pain in the neck. The board of elders, another burden.

And here's Paul saying, you remember when I was with you, I was like a mother nursing you at my breast. I was not just going to give you a sermon. I didn't have a sermon for you.

I was going to give you my life. I wasn't there for a dollar or for you to think, oh, what a great preacher. Do you think any mother thinks about her baby that way? And see, with that kind of passion, a prayer is born that you can never teach.

When a mom has a baby, I was watching one of, I think Pastor Thomas' children holding one of the grandchildren. When that baby was little, let's say it was three months old and it had 105 degree

temperature, do you think you had to wake that mother up in the morning and say, now pray for the baby today and at night walk with the baby if the baby cries. Do you think you've got to tell a mother that? That mother's going to walk with that baby and pray.

Why? Because there's a bonding. See, we're trying to teach people to pray who don't even care about other people. And we pastors, unless we have a baptism of love, listen, I've been there.

I know what this is about. I preach loveless messages. More about that later.

But when you don't have a baptism of love, you just preach to look good in the pulpit and get through another meeting. That's what I did for months when I first went into ministry. Just get through another Sunday.

But like a mother nursing a baby, ready to go down and give my life for the congregation. One day it looked like I was going to give my life for the congregation. A number of years ago, a man drew a gun on me in one of the Sunday services.

He was in the back, Jewish fella, troubled in his mind. And I got through with the message and I was standing right here and I closed my eyes and I started to just entreat the people. I got such a baptism of love.

I started to plead with the people to come to the Lord. He was under conviction but we didn't know it. And he just drew out a .38 and he held it, pointed toward me, walked out, came down the aisle and walked up on the platform before the ushers could react with the gun drawn on me.

And my wife was playing the synthesizer, a piano behind me and she yelled out my name, Jim, Jim, twice. And I'm telling people come to Jesus. Meanwhile, I'm on my way to Jesus.

And he walked across the stage. My eyes were still closed and he took the gun and he just threw it down. And I heard the noise.

I was startled. I opened my eyes and there's a gun on my pulpit. This is not something I was looking for.

He started to run off the platform. I began to chase him. And he just got off and down the row started yelling, Jesus, help me! Because he had planned to hurt someone with that gun.

And God's love so convicted him that he made up in his troubled mind the idea, I gotta give this gun away to the preacher. He's the only one I can trust with it. So he walked up and threw it on my pulpit.

And how we wept over him. Oh, I know what it is to preach when there's love in my heart and I know what it is to just talk. I'm so sick of just talking.

See, Paul had this ability, this bonding that made him to have a passion. When my daughter was away from God eleven years ago and my wife and I went through a two-and-a-half-year nightmare. When I entreated my daughter, I didn't say, Dearly beloved, could you turn to Jeremiah 11-4? I entreated her.

That's my girl. That's how Paul must have talked to them. Remember what he said in Acts 20 when he's giving a review of how he was to the Ephesian elders? Day-to-day with tears.

I pleaded with you to cleave to the Lord. We've lost that passion. Now we're interested in more what works in Sunday school.

What's the new bus thing? We're never going to build a church with buses. Because God never intended to be built that way. But then there's more than that.

Paul goes on talking about this relationship and he says, Now you know when I was torn away from you. Notice, this is love talk like a boyfriend and a girlfriend. When I was torn away from you.

Not when my itinerary caused me to leave you. When I was torn away from you. But not just in person.

Not in thought. I was always thinking about you. I tried many times to come to you but Satan stopped me.

For in the day of Jesus Christ what is my crown? What is my joy? What is my glory? Is it not you? Preachers, listen to me pastors. When Jesus comes the only thing you can show him are the people who love God who have come in under your ministry. What are you going to show Jesus when he comes? Your building? What am I going to show him? My book? He already wrote the Bible.

When the angels come I'm going to say, Look at the carpet and the lighting we have in this new facility. You think any of that matters to God? No, Paul says, My crown is not my visions that I had that I couldn't share with anybody. Or not that I wrote a good part of the New Testament.

My crown, my joy, my glory is this. Here they are, Lord, my people. Not your sermons or your books.

People. That's all you can show, pastor. That's all my wife and I are worth.

We have to present Calvin's and people and say, Lord, here they are. How many pastors do you think think that way? How many pastors and Sunday school workers are thinking, This is my crown. This is my glory.

This is my joy. You see, you can't teach this. Brothers and sisters, if there's anything that has to change in our country, if we're going to have a revival, is we can't teach things that only the Holy Spirit can do.

You can't teach love. We have right now the cult of the teacher. The Bible says there's room for teacher, but after the teacher teaches, you've got to get before God and get filled by His Spirit.

He's the only one who can produce love. How can you teach love? You can teach about love, but you can't teach love into someone because God is love. God's love is shed abroad in our heart by the Holy Spirit.

So in many times, we have congregations who are in a comatose state, loveless, prayerless, Bible-less, and we're telling them to do things that they don't have the life to do, and we think we can teach them to do it. You can't. They need to be revived by the Holy Spirit.

We've got a couple somewhere here in one of these rooms somewhere in this building. Timothy and Esther Arthur. She's from Africa.

He's from the Caribbean. They're one of the choice couples in the church. They came to me when they knew I was coming here, and they said, Pastor, can we fly with you? We'll just lock ourselves in a room and pray the whole time you're preaching.

They've been here since Saturday praying for this conference, and right now, while I'm speaking, they're interceding to the throne of grace. You think I taught them that? You think they would do that because I told them? No. God put that in their heart.

Amen. Let's give God glory for what He did. Carol, if you and Jonathan would go to the instruments.

So you are my crown. You are my joy. That's it.

Not where I've been invited or awards for my book or Carol's Grammy Awards. When Jesus comes, it's going to have to be the saints. That's all I can show.

Later, he says the most amazing thing. I haven't seen this in 10 people in my life. I was brought up around church.

My dad backslid and became an alcoholic for 20-some years. Carol's dad was a preacher. He passed on to be with the Lord a few years ago.

I've met a lot of famous ministers now. I've been around a number of good men and women of God, but I haven't seen what I'm about to tell you now. This is stranger than fiction.

Paul says, when I could take it no longer being away from you. I mean, that's love. When I could take it no longer being away from you people.

Paul, you're famous. No, no. Those are my children.

I can't stand being away from them. I sent Timothy to see how you're doing, and now he came back and he told me, and then the talk gets mushy. He told me that you remember me just like I remember you, and you miss me like I miss you, and you love me even as I love you, and he says, and now I really live because you're standing firm in the Lord.

Now I'm really, I'm under persecution. I'm in a bad situation, but I don't even think about it. Now I really live and I rejoice because my children are standing firm in the Lord.

The ones I've nurtured and preached the gospel to and led them into the things of the Spirit. You think that's common in the ministry today? I don't want to be judgmental. Well, I'll tell you about myself because I'm one of the sadder cases.

When I went into the ministry, I told you how difficult it was. Just stay focused with me here and we'll close in a moment. When in the ministry, Carol and I are struggling.

We're young. We got one little kid. We're working second jobs because, you know, you make \$3,800 the first year in the ministry.

That's not going to cut it. You make \$5,500 the second year in the ministry. Well, in that first few months there at the Brooklyn Tabernacle, you know, 20 people, sometimes two or three in the Tuesday night meeting, which was supposed to be a prayer meeting, but there was no prayer.

Well, in the midst of all of that, I began one day, one Tuesday. The weather was bad. I knew three or four people would be coming that night, so I went into the sanctuary by myself and I started to just walk around and pray.

You know, sometimes it's good to just walk and pray. Sometimes you get tired if you just kneel in one position, and it's not the position. It's opening your heart to God.

And I begin to tell God, God, you know, money's missing. Money's been missing from the offering baskets. One of the ushers was on the take.

There's a lack of cohesiveness. I don't think the people are listening to my preaching, and even though I'm inexperienced and haven't been to Bible school, there seems to be no spirit of cooperation. There doesn't seem to be much love.

There's not much worship. And I began to just complain to God about everything. And as I was praying there, after a while, the Lord began to draw near to my heart as our brother was sharing what happened to him after he lost his wife.

And the Lord began to indicate to me that he would show me what was wrong with the church, the main problem, so that I could really address it. And then out of nowhere, like a bolt, the Lord just said, the main problem in the church is you. You're prayerless.

You don't love my people. Those are my people. And you don't love them.

You're just preaching down to them. You're phony. You're artificial in the pulpit.

You're afraid to just talk and be natural. You think you have to act like a preacher, and I abhor you acting like a preacher. I don't want you to be a preacher.

I want you to be you. I'll make you a preacher. You just be you.

Well, I remember dropping on my knees, and then I went on my face, and I was there for a long time. You know, whom the Lord loves, he chases. And anybody bears fruit who's connected to the vine, that branch is cleansed and pruned so they'll bear more fruit.

And God began to do an overhaul early on in my ministry, of which there's had to be many because I had the tendency to slide back into mechanical, just get through, just preach. In other words, sometimes the burdens are so great, the activities are so great, if I'm not careful and don't spend time with God, I become a professional. I become a two-bit preacher with sermons.

New York City doesn't need sermons. It needs God. You gotta bring God to the people.

A couple years ago was one of the clinchers, though, for me. Church has grown. We've started over 20 churches throughout the city and around the country.

Choirs working so hard, producing albums. You know, we've seen God bless in so many ways. And on Easter Sunday night, we're having a big outreach and a girl who is a crack addict and a heroin addict and has the virus, HIV positive, she's giving her testimony in the choir of what the Lord has done in her life.

And it's the end of a long, at that time, we only had three meetings in the day, but it's the end of a long Sunday. I've been there from early in the morning to evening service at that time was at 7.30, so it's now 9.30, 20 to 10. And I'm so tired that I make an invitation after the choir sings and she gives her testimony.

There's people all over the front of the church. The personal workers are working with them. Everybody's doing their thing.

And I'm just so exhausted. I pull my tie down and I just put my feet, like if I would drop on the floor now, and just let my feet dangle over the platform and just go, God, I'm so tired. Inner city, everything is rushed.

The subway runs under our church. It's not an easy place to be. So as I'm sitting there, I'm just saying, well, God, thank you.

I got through the day. There's a guy I see looking at me down the center aisle about the fourth row up. He's in the aisle.

Everybody's, see Jonathan's playing? That's just the way Jonathan was playing that night. He's playing the organ and people are praying and we're giving counsel because when they come in with problems, you can't rush them in and out. You got to pray through.

You can't give them a little memory verse and say, on your way now. They're dealing with problems you can't imagine. So this guy's looking at me, a black guy.

I thought he was 50. He was only 32. Gives you an idea how he looked.

And he's looking at me and he's kind of sheepish. He got a cap in his hand. He's looking at me, looks filthy.

And us being in the inner city, the doors are open to everyone. You know, anybody could come in through the door because that's what a church is supposed to be. Church is not supposed to be a nice place for the family.

Where did you find that in the Bible? It's supposed to be a Holy Ghost intensive care unit. Supposed to save lives. That's supposed to be a nice place for mom and dad and junior.

That's nowhere found in the Bible. It's supposed to be a place where no matter how messed up you are, you can come and no matter what color you are, you can come and someone will love you and give you the gospel of Jesus Christ. That's what the church is supposed to be.

I'm down here and my feet are dangling off. And this guy goes there and I say to myself, what a bummer. I'm going to end Easter Sunday after all this work handing money to some guy panhandling because that happens in our church.

People come in and look to hit somebody up for money. Come here. He walks toward me and he got, as God is my holy witness, he got within.

He got six feet of me, seven feet of me and I smelled a smell and I've smelled a lot of smells in my life. I smelled a smell, an odor that was horrific. Feces, urine, street, sweat.

In fact, it was so bad that as this guy stood in front of me just right there and my legs are dangling off, I would breathe in when I looked away and then I would talk to him exhaling. I would go, what's your name? You homeless? He said, yeah. He smelled horrible.

Face, hair matted, filthy clothes. I didn't know that he had been laying on the side of our building. He used to lay in his own urine out there.

So, as I looked at him, I said, how long have you been in the street? He said, I've been homeless six years. Where did you sleep last night? In a deserted truck. What's your name? David.

What are you into? Well, I didn't need to see too much. His eyes were glassy. Breath was reeking from liquor.

I do a little crack, too. So, I reached, just like I'm reaching now, to give him some money, you know. Guys down, Easter Sunday, the least you could do is something good.

And as I took out my money, just like I did now, he got close to me and pressed in and put his finger in my face and said, preacher, I don't want your money. I want that Jesus you were talking about. I said, don't clap, wait.

And when he said that, the lights went out for me. I totally forgot about him and I got so convicted because here I am, a pastor of a church, and I'm not only not in the spirit, I don't even sense that Jesus is sending me somebody for the kingdom. I'm ready to give him \$5 to get rid of him.

And at that moment, as the Lord is my holy witness right now, I forgot about him and I lifted my eyes and my hands to heaven and I said, oh God, forgive me please. Please forgive me for being so insensitive. I've become the very thing I don't want to be.

Oh God, help me please. I totally forgot about him but I'm telling you, whatever your theology is, I'm just telling you what happened. God gave me a fresh feeling of his spirit and his love.

His love began to just well up inside of me like incredible and David picked it up in a moment. He knew something was happening to me. It was happening like this and as I just sat there, legs dangling over, weeping with my hands up, he fell against me and leaned against my chest.

And I put my arms around him and he began to weep and I was weeping. What a beautiful God spoke to my heart and said, you smell that smell? That's what you and your wife have been called to do. Love that smell.

That's the smell of the world that I sent my son to die for. If you want nice smells and nice people, you'll never work for me. But if you're willing to go and love them in my name, I can use you for my glory.

David Ruffin that day found the Lord Jesus as his Savior. We got him into a hospital, he detoxed for a few days. That Thanksgiving, we had already fixed his teeth, he had a gaping hole here.

He should have died several times. He was once in a crack house and the mattress went up and he was so out of it it took somebody else pulling him out of it. That Thanksgiving he sat in my table with my children and my wife with his teeth Now this thing cannot be taught and I'll tell you why.

Paul couldn't teach it. Paul could not produce this in people. In the second chapter of Philippians he tells them I'm sending Timothy to you.

He's the only one I have that will care for your life. He was the one I have that will care your He the only one I have that will care for your life. He was the only

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