

Wed. Evening Service (2002 C&ma Council)

by Jim Cymbala

Jim Cymbala's sermon emphasizes the importance of worship, community, and the mission of church planting in small towns to reach the lost for Christ.

Duration: 2:21:11

Scripture: John 15:1

Topics: "Christian Life"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of being a competent minister of the new covenant rather than just being faithful. He uses the analogy of a losing sports team to illustrate the point that simply having nice uniforms or being faithful is not enough if one is not achieving success in their ministry. The speaker also laments the trend of shorter church services to accommodate people's desire to watch long football games, suggesting that it reflects a lack of faith. The sermon concludes with a testimony from a minister in Fredericktown, Ohio, who shares about his heart for evangelism and the positive impact he has seen in his community.

Transcript

Good evening. Let's try that again. Good evening.

We come together to worship the Lord. We gather here to praise Him. We come to bless the name of the Lord, for He is worthy to be praised.

And what we do as a movement, as a group of people, we do for the sake of His kingdom, for His glory. Would you stand and join us as we sing together? For the sake of Your kingdom, I'll give up my life. For the sake of Your kingdom, for the sake of Your kingdom, for the sake of Your kingdom.

Amen. For the sake of Your kingdom, Lord, we'll give up our lives and we stand together as Your people. Amen.

Lift up the name of the Lord tonight, for He is worthy to be praised. And everything that we offer up unto the Lord, we want to offer up to Him as a sweet aroma of praise. I want to teach you a song tonight that we're going to be singing tonight and tomorrow night.

And we want to offer this up to the Lord as a prayer of our hearts. I'm going to just play through it and sing through it without the instruments, invite you to sing, so that makes sure we have it together. And then

we'll take it back to the top.

The verse goes like this. Let the words of my mouth and the song of my heart read you, O Lord, a sweet aroma of praise. Let it fill the air.

As creation declares the glory of You, let my life and my all lift a sweet aroma of praise. Let it fill the air. Creator of all, can you hear the sweet sound of praise? Now as you join us, just invite you to sing with me.

Let the words of my mouth and the song of my heart read you, O Lord, a sweet aroma of praise. Let it fill the air. As creation declares the glory of You, let my life and my all lift a sweet aroma of praise.

Hallelujah. Lord, we love You. Let our song be a sweet aroma of praise.

Will you try that with me? Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Lord, we praise You.

Hallelujah. Lord, we love You. Let our song be a sweet aroma of praise.

You think you got it? Sounds like we got it. Let's take it from the top. Let the words of my mouth and the song of my heart read you, O Lord, a sweet aroma of praise.

Amen. Let's clap our hands unto the Lord. Let our song be a sweet aroma of praise to You, Lord.

Together as Your people, we make a declaration that we believe in You. We believe in God the Father. We believe in Christ the Son.

We believe in the Holy Spirit. We are His church and we stand as one. Shout unto the Lord tonight.

He is worthy. Worthy is our King. Amen.

Father God, we bless Your name tonight. Your loving kindness is better than life. Our lips will praise You, Lord.

Thus will we bless You. And in Your name, we lift up our hands before Your throne. You are worthy and we bless Your name.

You are worthy, Lord, and we give You all honor. You are worthy, Lord, and we give You all praise. You are worthy, Lord, and we set ourselves before You.

To You we sing because we believe Your word that Jesus came, died, rose again, conquered death, hell, and the grave. And because of His work at Calvary, we can live victorious lives. The power of Your Spirit.

Thank You, Lord, for this opportunity to worship You tonight. In Jesus' name. Amen.

You may be seated. Dennis and Lori Turner have been ministering in Fredericktown, Ohio for three years. It's a new work, and Dennis has a heart and a desire and compassion for people.

While he was doing his undergraduate work, he became involved with Campus Crusade for Christ. And through that work, he gained a heart for evangelism and discipleship. And his story tonight is the one of what's been happening in Fredericktown, Ohio.

Dennis Turner. What do apple butter, corn, and tomatoes have in common? More specifically, what do apple butter parades, corn festivals, and tomato shows have in common? Well, it's all representative of

small-town America. And in small-town America, those kinds of celebrations are the world's fair.

That's small-town life. And back in 1998, while working alongside Reverend Yogi Durbin, our rural church felt an unmistakable leading by God to plant a church, a daughter church, in Fredericktown, Ohio. So my wife, Lori, and my daughter, Ramey, at the time, left a youth pastorate in one rural town and became a church planter in another rural town.

And North Woodbury Alliance gave 40 people tons of resources and supplies and almost \$10,000 cash to help us get started at New Life Community Church. And God has blessed that commitment and that dedication, and we're very grateful to be a part of it. God has blessed us with growth.

From a core group of 40 people, we had doubled in size by the end of year one, and by the end of year two, we had tripled in size. At the end of last year, we were averaging a little over 140 people, and already the first four months of this year, we've spiked into the 200s a few times, having averaged less than 160 on Sunday morning average attendance. But the real excitement as far as our growth is concerned is all the young people that have been coming.

About a quarter of our population at New Life is under the age of eight. And on Wednesday nights at our Backdoor Cafe, which is our ministry to our teens, there are about 30 to 50 teenagers coming in, and God is blessing our youth ministry beyond belief right now. God has also blessed us with conversion growth.

Last year, we saw 43 people make professions of faith in Jesus Christ. In over three and a half years of being a church plant, we've seen around 70 people make the decision to receive Jesus Christ into their lives through the ministry of New Life. And as perhaps you already read, of particular joy to me is the fact that both of my parents have received Jesus Christ at New Life, and I've had the wonderful privilege of baptizing them.

I feel like the church was planted for my family, in a sense. God has also blessed us with vision, where we have four part-time staff directors working alongside of me who are committed to evangelism and discipleship. God has blessed us with a visionary lay leadership team who is also committed to the same heart for outreach.

And evidence last year, we had over 50 small group and corporate outreach events in 2001 alone, and we're very grateful that God has given us that kind of heartbeat. God has also blessed us with financial stability, tremendous expressions of worship, and service for the Lord in a growing network of about 10 small groups right now. Church planting has been a whirlwind, to say the least.

But back to apple, butter, corn, and tomatoes. Fredericktown is a town of approximately 7,000 people, which already consisted of 10 churches in the town before we arrived. And many people asked us the question, why Fredericktown? Upon further investigation, we found out that Fredericktown already boasted four tanning salons of 7,000 people.

And we said that if a town can support four tanning salons, it certainly can support one more church. But there are other answers to why Fredericktown, and the first one was undoubtedly the spirit of God was moving toward Fredericktown. For the leadership at Northwood Berry Alliance, we were looking in one direction to plant a church, but God's spirit was unmistakably pointing in another direction, and we felt very much led by God to go to Fredericktown.

We also projected that if all 10 of the churches in Fredericton were averaging 200 people each, which they certainly were not, but even if they were, that would still be 5,000 unchurched, unreached people in Fredericton alone. We also realized that genuine biblical community and relevant worship were absent from those 10 churches, and that a majority of them were not even preaching the gospel. Add to that stats like 80% of all Americans have no meaningful contact with a church, and even a third of all those who go to churches in America haven't experienced the presence of God in worship.

And with things like that, we said, how could we not go to Fredericton? And we're so grateful that God led us there. And I just don't think I'll ever forget Dean and Cheryl McCammott coming to the realization that worship is a celebration of who God is, of Lyle and Jackie Turner and their daughter Jolene praying to receive Christ after a vacation Bible school and being baptized together as a family. I'm not going to forget Nicole and Jeremy Bennett who are standing boldly for Christ now, rededicating her life and him just receiving Christ not so long ago and being baptized and working with our youth.

And I'm so blessed to be a part of where God is changing people's lives by His Holy Spirit. Now, perhaps you've noticed on commercials that small businesses are beginning to take over the corporate world, and the corporate world is realizing the excitement and capital that small businesses bring. They're simply realizing what you and I know, have known for several years now, and that when we start small in the kingdom of God, like a mustard seed perhaps, God causes the growth.

And we realize that it's not just a whirlwind of excitement, but that church planting is the most effective strategy in reaching lost people for Jesus Christ. Perhaps you live in a small town. Perhaps you live near a small town, and you've never considered church planting there, not because you don't have a heart for the lost, but because small towns look so nice, and they look so quaint, and they look so safe.

But let me tell you a few things about small towns, at least Fredericton. Small towns are changing. The demographics of small towns are changing drastically.

New people, especially commuters to larger cities, are looking for those nice, safe places to live, a nice, safe place to raise their family, where nice schools are there, and drugs and violence are at a minimum. And so new people are moving into small towns, which creates a wonderful environment for church planting, but there's also a definite need for new people as they enter into a small town, because we've found that oftentimes small town, hometown churches are totally missing the fact that their community is changing, and so church planting can be there for them. Small towns are also not as healthy as you might think.

Oh, they have the appearance of health. They look good on the outside, but when you start looking inside the walls of the homes, you see that families are breaking apart at an alarming rate, that morality is low, with the increased percentage of extramarital affairs which are ripping families apart, and I've just been talking with a mother just on Friday before we left to come here about that very problem. Teen drug and alcohol and sexual promiscuity run rampant, and real life issues are being missed by a lot of those small town, hometown churches who don't want to see that kind of thing, and so church planting brings new life to those places that aren't so healthy.

At our church planter's breakfast this morning, one brother shared about his inner city church plant and talked about the dysfunction in the families and in the homes in this inner city, and I'm not minimizing that by any means, but not two months ago was I sitting in a small group with a woman who grew up in Fredericton, and she's growing in Christ, and she was sharing how excited she was that new life came

because she's starting to deal with some of those issues, and although she put a little band-aid on it, she said that we put the fun in dysfunctional. We realized that you can't go anywhere anymore and pretend that homes and families aren't dysfunctional. Homes are breaking apart all over the place, and so although they look healthy, small towns aren't as healthy as you think.

They're also not as safe as you might think, and we're going to be hearing from Pastor Cymbala in Brooklyn, and I think we all remember our brother who passionately shared about his New York City church where the murder rate was the number one murder rate around, and I don't even know if Fredericktown has a murder rate, but the eternal dangers are just as real, and living in a small town and being from a small town, I might even argue that those eternal dangers are more dramatic because people in small towns don't even think they're lost, and so they're not as safe as you might think, but small towns are reachable. Small towns are reachable, and that's my favorite part about a small town. Our growing congregation is focused in intentional commitment to the gospel of Jesus Christ and saturating Fredericktown over and over and over again, and isn't that the Jerusalem strategy where you reach your town and then you branch out from there, and God has already given Fredericktown a vision to not just go to Fredericktown, but our whole county is made up of small towns.

There's not one large city in Knox County, and so we want to go to the next towns also, and we really believe that God can use us to reach our small towns and therefore fulfill our part of the Great Commission. Tonight I was asked to speak on what are some movement-like qualities that you've seen at New Life, and I think the two most movement-like qualities we've seen are, as I've already talked about, changed lives, and then the other is our partnering with existing churches in Fredericktown. Now, one warning to any of you who might ever be asked to come up here and speak at council on anything.

You better think twice, because in the last few weeks and in the last few months, both the aspect of changed lives and our partnering together with other churches has been breaking down. There have been tensions, and there's at least been a breakdown of relationships in both of those movement-like qualities. We're realizing that we're probably more entrenched in spiritual battle than we ever dreamed of going to the nice, safe, small towns.

And so all of the statistics are great, and the papers look wonderful, and we are experiencing the presence and the power and the spirit of God, but the rough part of church planning is the emotional drain of our dear friends who received Christ two years ago and were baptized, going through a very desperate and difficult situation just a few weeks ago, and our Elder Board came alongside of them and helped them along and realized that we needed to step back and let them work some things out on their own, and they had such an unexpected explosion of rage, cursed our Elder Board out, and within a week, left Fredericktown altogether and moved to Texas, just like that, after two years, literally, of pouring our lives into them, and that is emotionally draining. Our relationships with some of the churches have grown tense, churches who don't necessarily or completely share our values and our beliefs and who feel, in a way, threatened by the growth that we've seen. Although out of the 150 people who have been added to that original group of 40, fewer than 20 of them have come from local Fredericktown churches, and so we're grateful that God is bringing the unchurched.

And so, as has been the refrain throughout this Council already, God is faithful. God is faithful and changed lives like Steve Murphy and Dennis Chase, who is written about in your Banner article, and Norman Baker and countless other adults and children. Their lives are being changed, and those lives that are being changed bring us great joy, and God brings himself great amounts of glory and reminds us why

Frederictown, and he reminds us why we're there.

And even despite our tension with some of the churches, through our initiatives and through God's working, we have been able to partner together with them through things like the National Day of Prayer, a Family Life Conference to our community, sharing resources, and three creative arts day camps, ministries to children that have seen over 100 children coming out each consecutive year. All of those churches, by the way, have also let us use their facilities. Every church in town has let us use their building for a special service or event because of all that I've reported to you, New Life does not have its own church building, nor do we have land to build yet.

And so God is still faithful, God is still moving despite the tension. And so I ask you to please pray. Please pray for us to lead the way in reaching our Jerusalem and our Judea and our Samaria and to the ends of Knox County and hopefully beyond.

Would you please pray for Chris and Shelly, those friends who moved to Texas and left, would you please pray that they would be not only restored in some form, in some way in relationships with us, but also be restored to the Lord. And I would also ask if you would please pray for us to find land and that we could build a building, a place to call home. And my last word to you is when you think of church planting, don't only think of overseas missions, don't only think of the depth of despair of the inner cities, but would you also think about apple butter, corn, and tomatoes.

Thank you. We're a people that are abundantly blessed, incredibly blessed, even to be in this type of facility. As you're well aware of, the costs of counsel are extreme, they're large, and we're going to ask you to give tonight the response to the need that we have.

The needs are substantial. We're a blessed people. God has used the Alliance people for many, many years to respond to needs, and again tonight we'll be asking you to do that.

We'll ask the ushers to be prepared for the offering. Tonight we have Paul Pitts with us. For those of you who were in Tampa, Florida, Paul ministered in music.

His ministry literally takes him around the world. At Christmas time this past year he was in Belfast. His desire is to bring peace, communion of God's people together.

He is a man that has been used in a great variety of churches, as well as ministering at national events, the National Basketball Association, the National Hockey League, have asked him to sing as well. So an internationally known minister, one who ministers through song, be Paul Pitts. Before he comes, let's bow for prayer, asking God's blessing upon the offering.

Father, we do thank you for your abundant blessing. We thank you for the blessings that you give people like Dennis and Lori. God, we thank you that you've blessed, incredibly blessed us, and we don't even know why, but you've done that.

And we would pray for your people to respond tonight out of love for you and out of love for our movement to the glory of God. We pray for Paul. God, minister through him.

May we hear from heaven as he ministers to us now. In Jesus' name we pray, amen. Amen, amen, amen.

Sing it over now. Listen to my story. It's a story about my Jesus.

Amen, amen. See the little baby Wrapped in a manger On Christmas morning See him at the seashore Talking to the fishermen And making them disciples Praying to his Father Then they crucified him It is an honor to bring glory and praise and majesty to the Lord Jesus Christ. He has been better to us than we could ever deserve.

Don't you agree? And I give him praise and honor tonight for the goodness, for dying for me, for shedding his blood for me, so that I could be redeemed. I am so blessed tonight. The most valuable time of my life is that when I kneel beside my couch or by my bed at night and I have intimate fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

That's the best time of my day. He gave us the words in the scripture, and the author of this song just simply took the scripture, took the prayer, and he wrote these words. Our Father which art in heaven hallowed be thy name thy kingdom come thy will be done as it is in heaven give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever In 1970, my sister Ruth was tragically taken in a very serious car accident.

In 1988, I stood by my father's bed as he told me that he loved me. He always had and he always will. After he told me that he loved me, he passed away.

In 1994, my wife Marilyn passed away due to a long drawn out illness due to diabetes. Through my experiences in my life, God has brought me to a ministry of comfort to those who have lost loved ones. This particular song seems to bring comfort to people who have dealt with the loss of loved ones.

It gives us hope to see them again. The author simply wrote these words. I dreamed of a city of glory So bright and so fair As I entered the gate I cried holy The angels all met me there To my joyful sights I saw Then I said I want to see Jesus The wall of that city I love They took me Bless his name In the presence of a holy God we Are not able to stand The presence of a holy God we are not able to come Except for The blood of Jesus Christ To those who don't know Christ Talking and singing about the shedding of blood Seems morbid But to those of us who know Christ It is the power of God unto the salvation What can wash away my sin?

Nothing but the blood of Jesus What can make me whole again? Nothing but the blood of Jesus I will ask the question Then invite you to answer it What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus What can make me whole again? Nothing but the blood of Jesus Oh precious Oh precious is the flow That makes me white as snow No other pout I know Nothing but the blood of Jesus This is all my hope and peace Nothing but the blood of Jesus This is all my righteousness Nothing but the blood of Jesus Stand and sing with us Oh precious is the flow Oh precious is the flow That makes me white as snow No other pout I know Nothing but the blood of Jesus There is only one Lord that we cling to One truth that we claim Won't you sing with us?

There is only one Lord that we cling to There is only one truth that we claim One way we walk it There is only one way that we walk There is only power Only power Oh I'm forever grateful To you That you came To seek and save the Lord Are you grateful to the Lord tonight? Are you grateful to the Lord for His goodness and mercy to us? Let every heart say amen Amen, you may be seated Our scripture reading this evening is from John chapter 15 the first 11 verses I am the true vine and my father is the vine dresser Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away And every branch that bears fruit he prunes that it may bear more fruit You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you Abide in me

and I in you As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine neither can you unless you abide in me I am the vine, you are the branches He who abides in me and I in him bears much fruit For without me you can do nothing If anyone does not abide in me he is cast out as a branch and is withered And they gather them and throw them into the fire and they are burned If you abide in me and my words abide in you you will ask what you desire and it shall be done for you By this my father is glorified that you bear much fruit So you will be my disciples As the father loved me I also have loved you Abide in my love If you keep my commandments you will abide in my love just as I have kept my father's commandments and abide in his love These things I have spoken to you that my joy may remain in you and that your joy may be full Over 120 years ago A.B.

Simpson arrived in New York City It wasn't long before he realized that there was great need The masses were coming The immigrants were coming There was sin in the city There was brokenness And you know the story of our beginning in the Christian Missionary Alliance began there in New York City Tonight our speaker Pastor Jim Cimbala comes from that city He has the spirit of Christ in him and on him the same as our founder many years ago By way of introduction this evening I'm going to read to you a testimony of one of our CNA pastors who visited his church When my wife and I visited New York City to visit our son and his wife I enjoyed visiting different churches One Sunday I attended the worship service at Brooklyn Tabernacle I was excited to hear the choir and hear the preaching of Pastor Cimbala I wanted a good place to sit so I arrived early at one of their four worship services While waiting for the service to begin I was observing all that I could take in A woman of color sat next to me in prayer After a while she seemed to be through with her prayer and I decided to do a good church growth interview I got her attention and asked her how long she had been a part of the church She replied, about a year I asked her how she heard about the church She said that her daughter was a part of the church and had invited her I decided to go for the gold and asked her Why did you decide to come to this church?

Why did you come here? I was expecting her to say something about the great world class choir or the inspiring preaching of Pastor Cimbala She said neither Instead she turned to me and gave me a look of bewilderment and said, God! The reason she is a part of Brooklyn Tabernacle is God My church growth callous heart learned that the evidence of an effective pastor is to have his people go to church for God's sake, not his And such is our speaker for the next three nights Pastor Jim Cimbala Thank you very much Thank you very much Before we go further, I want to thank President Nanfeld and the people here in leadership who invited me years ago I was sharing with Brother Nanfeld before the service that I think I got this invitation in 1999 and when they ask you what you're doing in 2002 it's a little bit of a stretch It's an honor to be invited here and to be here especially never dreaming that it would fall on the busiest time of my life in the recent years because on Sunday we just moved in to a new 4000 seat facility in downtown Brooklyn right across the river from where the World Trade Center stood and had three services there at 9, 12 and 4 and turned away almost 1000 people from the 4 o'clock service and this had been a project going on for years by faith and multiplied millions of dollars needed and we started with no money and we don't have wealthy people there but God is a good God, isn't he?

God is a good God and so it fell to come here to Nashville, which was a joy this week and last night we had our first prayer meeting in the new facility and I'm just rejoicing to see our folks now have more space and not turning people away sometimes for the prayer meeting as we have in the past so the Lord is good and it's just a joy to be here you know your founder has been one of my teachers you might not think I'm that old but A.B. Simpson has been one of my teachers I never had a chance to go to Bible school or seminary so authors like A.B.

Simpson have been a great blessing to my life everything in print and out of print that I can get about by Dr. Simpson has blessed my life so I just realized I turned to my wife Carol last night and she said you're leaving tomorrow for Nashville I said yes and I said you know what I've never preached in a missionary alliance church in my life you name any denomination I've either preached in one of their churches or preached in one of their conventions and here the group of people that I've treasured so much I probably know more about A.B.

Simpson and Tozer than a lot of you folks and here I am for the first time so it's a joy to be here let's all stand shall we in a moment we're going to teach you try to teach you a song this is a stretch, I only learned this song about three weeks ago and I have friends from Nashville who have been in ministry all their life Jim and Joanne Hammerly Jim's playing the piano and Phil and Marie Arminia who live in the Nashville area and knew I was coming and I said would you help me so I could teach a chorus but before I do any of that I know you can't all know one another so would you turn around and shake hands with four or five people that you've never seen before in your life would you do that right now just turn around they'll lift the lights up and say hello how are you come on look around and greet somebody Chancellor Mighty God Our Father Prince of Peace Great I Am The Lamb The Lamb We're going to lift that one key I just heard this song about three weeks ago we have no program worship in our church we never know what we're going to sing meeting to meeting we never have any concept or idea when we step out what we're going to sing but we hope that that makes opening for the Holy Spirit to lead us and to guide us you know if he led the Israelites for 40 years how many believe he can lead us through one service amen I figured that out a while ago we're getting over programmed I think don't you think and not leaving space for the Holy Spirit we're putting on sometimes too much of a performance rather than remembering our religion began in an upper room and Jesus was born in a stable so this song just takes some names out of Isaiah 9 6 and some other places and says it about it just says Wonderful Counselor Mighty God Our Father Prince of Peace Great I Am We Glorify the Lamb so if you can pick it up we're going to sing it you follow us Wonderful Counselor Mighty God Our Father Prince of Peace Prince of Peace Great I Am Great I Am The Lamb Lift your right hand and sing with me Wonderful Counselor Counselor Mighty God Mighty God Our Father Our Father Prince of Peace Prince of Peace We Glorify We Glorify The Lamb Great I Am Lord talk to us tonight as we open your word the last thing we need is just another same old same old meeting lord we need to hear from you we can't do it unless you help me and then give us all ears to hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church we dedicate this meeting to your praise and your honor and the building up of your people we ask it in Jesus name and everyone said Amen.

You may be seated. Thank you, Phil Marie. I'd like you to turn in your Bibles, if you would, to the book of Genesis, and I'd like you to go to chapter twelve with me, would you? Genesis twelve, verse one.

Genesis twelve, verse one. The Lord had said to Abram, leave your country, your people and your father's household, and go to the land that I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you, and I'll make your name great.

Look at all these promises. And you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you, I will curse.

And all peoples on earth will be blessed through you. So, Abram left, as the Lord had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Haran.

He took his wife, Sarah, his nephew, Lot, all the possessions that he accumulated, and the people they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there. I want to talk to you about faith tonight, and in talking about faith, I can't even stress the primacy of faith in the New Testament when it comes to the Christian church. When we ask how a church is doing, most people talk about how many are you running, who's the pastor, what's the budget, how big is your building, and so on and so forth.

But that's not at all, anywhere near close, the way the apostles and the New Testament look at the issue of faith, at the issue of the church and what's really important. For example, I could look at any place in the New Testament, but I'll just find this spot here in 1 Thessalonians 3. Listen to this. Paul's talking to the church there, Thessalonica.

When we could stand it no longer, we thought it best to be left by ourselves in Athens. We sent Timothy, who's our brother and God's fellow worker in spreading the gospel of Christ. Why? Why did he send Timothy? To strengthen and encourage you in your faith.

Verse five. For this reason, when I could stand it no longer, I sent to find out about your faith. Verse six, but Timothy has now just come back to us from you and has brought us good news about your faith and your love.

Therefore, verse seven, we were encouraged about you because of your faith. Verse 10, night and day, we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith. The question that Paul would be asking me, it was here is Jim Symbola.

How's the faith at the Brooklyn Tabernacle? Not how many you're running. My wife's won four Grammy Awards. That doesn't mean anything to God.

It's the faith. What kind of faith do the people have? That's the question for in your congregations. And I'd like to remind you that all of us are going to appear at the judgment seat of Christ.

Every one of us. You're not going to be judged by the missionary alliance or by the church growth magazines. You're going to you and I are going to stand naked before Jesus Christ and give an account for the quality of our work.

And we're going to be judged by the Bible. And the Bible tells us that without faith, it's what? Impossible to what? Please, God, without faith, you can come up here tonight. You could cry a river at this place or at any other church you go to and make all the promises how you're going to live better for God.

If there's no faith there, it is no way, shape or form pleases God. For without faith, it's impossible to please God. You can make promises, vows, turn over a new leaf without faith.

It's impossible to please God. In fact, the Bible tells us the just shall live. How? By faith.

Not just start by faith, but the Bible tells us the just shall live every day by faith. The Bible tells us that according to your faith, so be it unto you. The Bible tells us that Jesus laid it down as a first spiritual principle.

According to your faith, so be it unto you. Great faith, great things God can do. Little faith at the Brooklyn Tabernacle.

Little things God can do. Doesn't matter what your history is. Doesn't matter how long you've been serving God.

According to your faith, so be it unto you. Jesus himself was limited when he went to his own hometown and could not do many miracles. It wasn't because the demons were stronger or because the diseases were more complex.

It was because of their unbelief. Imagine what faith means to God when starting with Abraham. We read these words, and Abraham believed God and his faith was credited to him for righteousness.

God took his faith and said, it's just as if you've obeyed the law, which Abraham hadn't. He lied at times. He risked his wife's honor and her own life.

He made huge mistakes at times, but he believed God. And the Bible says that God credited his faith as righteousness. The just shall live by faith.

We're saved by grace through faith. The goal as ministers of the gospel is to get people to believe. Whosoever has faith will and calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.

It's faith that God's looking for. The Bible tells us that this matter of faith is so powerful that the apostles saw it as the secret of Jesus's ministry and said, increase our faith. The Bible tells us in another place, whatever is not a faith is sin.

Jesus taught his disciples, have faith in God. All the people in Hebrews 11, that great role of heroes, what made them great in God's eyes? Their faith. By faith they were commended to God.

Look at some of the characters that are in that list, Samson, David, and we know some of his failings, but why were they great in God's eyes? Because of their faith. God's looking for faith. The Bible, Peter tells us that Christians are kept living.

Holy victoriously are kept by the power of God through faith. Once unbelief comes in, then it cuts us off from the very power of God. We have lost the magnitude of the importance of faith.

Now, the hyper-faith movement and the positive confession and prosperity nonsense has made people see that era, but then move away to a place of no faith. Just making vows and promises, oh God, I'll try harder, and thinking that by our own human strength we're going to be what God wants us to be. Never.

The just shall live by faith. Paul says in one of his Corinthian letters, we walk by faith and not by what? And not by sight. We walk by faith, he says.

We don't go by what we see. We go by faith. And the dilemma hitting America today in our churches is the faithlessness.

No wonder Jesus said, when the Son of Man returns, will he find faith on the earth? He didn't say, when I come back, will people be trying hard? Or will they be working hard in their churches? He didn't say that. He said, when the Son of Man comes back, will he find faith? Did you know that Jesus was never astounded by anything he saw on the earth except faith? You never see anywhere in the New Testament where Jesus saw someone who lived godly and said, Peter, James, John, look at this guy. This is a godly guy.

You never read that any place in the Bible. He never saw anybody as impressing him as being smart or wise. He never said to his disciples, let's pick up Levi or Matthew.

This guy's a genius with numbers. Jesus never said that. But remember when the centurion said, no, you don't have to go to my house.

Just speak your word. And Jesus said, men, I haven't seen faith like this in all of Israel. Jesus was amazed at faith, and he was amazed and shocked at unbelief, like in his own hometown.

Now, we've degenerated into a position, I'm afraid, where faith has become intellectual affirmation of certain truths in the Bible. We think that faith means to get people to agree in their minds that the Bible is true in certain places. The Bible is true.

Well, that has an element of faith, but that's not the faith the Bible talks about. To get someone to believe there's one God, the devil believes there's one God. To get them to believe that Jesus died on the cross for their sins, the devil knows that.

He believes that, intellectually affirms that. Of course, he was there when it happened. So what is faith? What is this thing that without which it's impossible to please God? What is this thing that God wants to see happen in downtown Brooklyn, at the Brooklyn Tabernacle, and in your churches and in your ministries? What is faith? What is this trusting, this leaning on God, this counting God as being faithful? How does this really work out? Well, the Bible gives us one great example of a man of faith.

In both the Old and New Testament, nobody stands out as an example of faith, apart from our Lord Jesus Christ, as Abraham does. In fact, Jesus said, call no man father, and yet Paul, in another sense, in the book of Romans, calls Abraham, Father Abraham, because Abraham is the father of everyone who believes. He's the father of true Israel, not biological Israel, because not everyone of the seed of Abraham is counted as true Israel, the Bible says, but it's only those who have faith like Abraham.

That's true Israel, whether they're black or white or brown or yellow or red. What made Abraham special was Abraham had faith. Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness.

He became a friend of God. God called him his friend, his servant, because of the faith that he had. And even though the law was added 400 years later, Paul tells us in Galatians and Romans that the plan of salvation goes back to the covenant that God made with Abraham.

He tried to get Abraham to believe. Look for the many commands that God gave Abraham. You will not find them.

God was giving promises to Abraham, for faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God, and you believe promises. God made promises to Abraham. I read seven of them there, really eight.

And Abraham responded to those promises by saying, if God said it, it's going to happen. I believe. And because he believed, God honored him like God.

Hardly anybody in the Bible. So what was Abraham's faith? What was Abraham's faith? I'm not going now by how I grew up and what I saw faith called. And don't go by your upbringing, because my upbringing might have been wrong and your upbringing might have been a little bit skewed.

Let's go to the word of God. And what is this faith? How does this faith work out? Well, when we look at the first contact that God had with Abraham, let's call him Abraham, although he was Abram back then in Genesis 12. We see three simple elements of faith that I want to leave with you tonight.

And then maybe we can pray together. Notice it's not prayer that heals the sick. It's the prayer of faith.

Saying prayers can be a waste of time unless there's faith. This is what A.B. Simpson started to delve in a man way ahead of his time, started to believe and teach that God could respond and heal people in response to the prayer of faith. He was laughed at in many quarters.

Well, I want to leave you these three things about the original faith of the original father of everyone who believes. And let's see how it applies to our life tonight and our ministries. We've got pastors here, right? We've got associates.

We've got people working with children and choir directors and everything else. Got to do this work by faith. First of all, we read this.

Now God had said to Abraham. Now God had said to Abraham the entire scenario of faith, the entire story of Abraham and his greatness begins with these words. Now God had said to Abraham, the first thing about Abraham's faith that we find was that you must hear a living word from the living God.

Abraham had no Bible. Abraham never went to a Bible study in his life because there was no Bible. The law hadn't been given, but God spoke to Abraham's heart or spirit in some way audibly appeared to him at times.

Whatever happened, this thing was not some intellectual mental trip that Abraham was on. God spoke to Abraham and it struck him so that it created faith because the Bible says faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. But the word of God that Abraham heard was not merely a written word.

There were no written words. It was a spoken word by the Holy Spirit. God speaking to his heart.

Now you know what our problem is today. Let me establish first this. The only rule of faith that we have, brothers and sisters, the only rule of faith we have is the word of God.

The only rule of faith we have, the only truth that we need to fight this good fight and serve the Lord is found in the Holy Scriptures. Anybody who goes outside of these scriptures, we're not going there because that's heresy. We're not.

First Corinthians four, six says, don't go beyond what is written. But the problem is that this word, this Bible that we have to read every day and stay in and live in, it has to become alive through the Holy Spirit. It has to become a living word from the living God, not just a Hebrew word or a Greek word or a word in your King James or your NIV or your new American standard.

It has to be something that God makes alive or there'll never be faith. The Pharisees carried around the biggest Bibles of their day and they're the ones who crucified the Lord of glory. So just merely knowing the Bible and having the Bible with you does not mean that you're going to have faith and live a godly life.

This is why George Mueller, that great saint who had all those orphanages in the 1800s and supported thousands of orphans merely through the prayer of faith. He writes in his journal that many mornings he would get up and have no faith to pray and his heart would be cold. So he would open the Bible and say,

Holy Spirit, now speak to me through the word that you inspired.

Speak to me through the word that you inspired here to get it in my heart, make it alive, give me revelation or I'll never have faith. Think of all the churches around America today where the word of God is being preached and it's putting people to sleep left and right. Think of it.

Are they doctrinally sound? You cannot accuse them of being doctrinally unsound. They are doctrinally sound. Is it boring? Very boring.

Why? There's no faith. The thing has never gripped the preacher. Preachers listen to me.

Unless this word of God grips us, how will it ever grip the people we're talking to? Do I get a witness here? Come on, let's put our hands together and affirm God's word. It has to grip us. There has to be a striking of a chord in our heart from the word of God by the Holy Spirit who inspired it.

In fact, you can't even understand this Bible unless the Holy Spirit teaches you it. You can get a PhD. You can study and be brilliant.

You can be a theologian and you won't have the faith of a slug unless this word of God becomes alive in your heart through the Holy Spirit. Think of the faithlessness in the pulpit today around our country. Think of the faithlessness in the congregations.

No anticipation that God's going to do anything. Just some tired old religious ritual that they've been doing for ten years. They're going to do it to pretend more.

And the world is going to hell in a bread basket. You would think somebody would stop and say, can't God do something more than this? Where's the God of Elijah? Where's the God of the New Testament? Where's the God of A.B. Simpson? Did he die? Simpson died, but God is still alive. Amen.

The Bible has to be made alive by the Holy Spirit. And how are we ever going to inspire faith in people unless we have faith? Faith is not birthed in us. It's not going to happen.

Listen, listen. I happen to speak at Moody's pastor's conference last week on Thursday night in Chicago. Dr. Stoll was a good friend of mine, invited me and I preached.

And while I was waiting for Dr. Stoll to do a radio program with him, I picked up Moody Monthly that was in the waiting room where I was. And Dr. Stoll had a very interesting article and he had some statistics that blew me away. Listen to this.

You want you want to hear about faithlessness? George Barna, the Christian pollster, has just done a new study on what's really going on in the church among evangelicals. That would include everyone who believes in a born again experience, believes in the veracity of scriptures, etc. On the topic of giving, giving is down 13% since 1998.

13% down. Even with 9-11. We lost four people in our church at 9-11 and we have a lady in our church who was the last human being pulled out of the rubble.

She was 26 hours in the rubble. She was on the 13th floor when it all came down. How she could be alive? It's impossible.

Every time I see her, I say, Janelle, God must have a plan for your life. How in the world? Listen to this. One out of six people in 1999 of evangelical Christians gave no money at all to their church.

8% of people earning less than \$20,000. Isn't this revealing? Of people earning less than \$20,000, 8% of them tithe, give 10% to their church. Of those making \$20,000 to \$40,000, 5% tithe.

Of those making \$40,000 to \$60,000 a year, 4% tithe. Of those making \$60,000 to \$75,000 a year, 2% are tithing. Of those making \$75,000 to \$100,000 a year, 1% tithe who go to church every Sunday.

And we're talking about Clinton or secular humanism and we're talking about all these things as being the problem. You've got to be kidding me. That's not the problem.

The church is the problem. The people have no faith in the church. We're setting up bogeymen and strawmen to look at, oh, it's terrible what's going on in the world.

Look what's going on in the church. People don't even have the faith to give to God. Why aren't people giving? Because they have no faith.

If you have no faith, why would you want to give money to an invisible God? How could you store up treasures in heaven if you have no faith? If you have no faith, you're going to hang on to every dollar you can. And that's what the stats are proving. Brothers and pastors, listen to me.

God just drew us into a \$40 million project with no money. We just moved in last Sunday. \$40 million.

If I would have known that from the beginning, I would have died. We had no money when we began negotiating with these people. And I appeared at the 700 Club to talk about my book, Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire, a few years ago.

And unsolicited, Pat Robertson saw me at the end of the program after interviewing me. He's not a close friend of mine. We've met a few times.

And he said, Jim, how are things going in New York? He worked up in New York, as some of you might know. And I said, well, here's the situation. I'm negotiating with some tough men.

There are three buildings in downtown Brooklyn. One is a historic theater built in 1917. It's the third largest theater in all of New York City after Radio City Music Hall and the Paramount Theater at Madison Square Garden.

I said, but they won't come down from this \$8.9 million. We've had it appraised. It would be a steal at \$6 million or so.

But we need for them to come down. And number two, I have no money. I'm fooling them.

They think I have money. I wear suits, but I have no money when I'm negotiating with them. I said, would you pray for me since you asked? He turned, walked toward the door, turned around at me again.

He said, I want to do more than pray for you. I want to help you in some way. I didn't know what that meant.

Next Tuesday, I got a letter, a telegram or a letter from him saying we just decided the 700 club, we're going to give you \$1 million. We took that from God as a, as an amen. When we did get a million dollars,

that's an amen, right? Would you say that's an amen? That's an amen, right? That's the basic, that's your basic amen.

And we, we moved on and started to negotiate. So I said to the men, uh, \$6.3 million. They said, no, no, no, no.

These are very tough men to deal with. Buildings were falling into worst disrepair, but I never knew what the project would involve. No original plans, a brand new HVAC, all heating, air conditioning, roofs, plumbing, like, like the whole thing from mammoth thing.

It's a big thing. So I said, no, 6.3. And they, the guy turned to me and said, I had just gotten a million dollars that week. He said, uh, who, what bank is going to lend you money anyway? Reverend banks don't want to lend a church's money.

I said, what bank? It's a cash deal. I'm going to give you a \$6.3 million. He went, what? It's a cash deal.

I said, of course, well, I wouldn't play with the bank. Why? Who needs a bank? He said, for real, let's shake. We'll, we'll, we'll, we'll sell it at your price.

And God supplied the money. But if he would have showed, showed me all that was involved back then, it probably would have staggered my faith. So we had to increase our faith.

But people have been giving all the royalties from my book, all the royalties from all the Carol's albums, all go toward the building fund. And, uh, from my first book that I've written. So, so God is using that an anonymous gifts of 5 million and anonymous gift.

I received in 10 minutes, \$6 million, a \$5 million gift and a \$1 million gift, both from people that I didn't know. You know what God has had me in and he wants, and you're in it too. And if, and you don't think you're not in it, you can't get left back.

He'll put you back again in the class. We're in a school of faith. God's trying to get us to believe because without faith, it's impossible to believe, to, to please him.

But it has to begin by a living word from the living God. We got to wait before the Lord and seek the Lord and our knees with the Bible open. We got to cry out to God and say, God, make this thing alive in my heart.

Otherwise it's just an intellectual word and it can be clever and you can construct, construct the sermon and put a poem at the end and a joke in the middle, but it's dead. It's dead. It's dead.

The only thing that makes listen, the letter kills, but the spirit gives life. When the spirit hits the word, that's when faith, imagine Jesus said, your fate has healed you. Your faith has healed you.

That's what Jesus said to a woman. Your faith has healed you. Number two, it begins by hearing a living word from the living God.

Number two, you have to leave. Do you realize brothers and sisters, as I get to wrap this up, do you realize that the first word that God ever said to Abraham was leave the first communication between almighty God and Abraham, our father, the father of all that believed the first word that he ever spoke was leave, leave, what leave or the child. These leave Heron, leave your culture, leave everything you're used

to, leave the friends you've been around, leave your father's household, leave the food you're used to, leave it and go to a place.

I'm not telling you where it is. I'll show you later, but leave. We're laughing, but this is what faith is about.

Nobody's ever had real faith who hasn't lived a life of leaving. When you walk by faith, you are always leaving. You never stay long any place, not talking geographically.

Listen to me. Well, leave your country, your people, your father's household. What I mean by that is if you study the lives of the people in the Bible, and if you study the lives of all the great men and women who have walked with God, I have a six, seven shelves in my library at home of nothing but biographies and autobiographies of great men and women of God, including a couple on AB Simpson and things about people like Tozer and Finney and Moody and all of that general booth of the Salvation Army.

All of them were leaving. They were always leaving. That's what made them so radical.

What I mean is when you walk by faith, God is always taking you from what is to what could be as he leads you and blesses you. Listen again. Faith means you're always having to be ready to leave what is what you're used to, the safety of that little box that we make for ourselves.

And God is always saying, step out to another place that will be better for you, a place of blessing, and you'll be a blessing to people. But you've got to leave to get where you're going. So now listen, listen.

What I mean is like leaving, leaving thought patterns, leaving definitions, leaving religious traditions, leaving the way it used to be. This is what made AB Simpson such a radical. AB Simpson was in the hood before there was a hood.

Read his biography about how he scratched out a living at the end of his life because he was helping so many people, doing radical things, working in a tough part of Manhattan even back then. He didn't fit in because he looked at the system, he looked at what was going on, he saw the lack of passion for souls, the lack of passion for prayer, he saw the lack of passion for a world evangelism, and he went off not knowing where he was going, just like Abraham, but God was with him. How about leaving definitions? You know what I found out? I have found out a very important truth in the last few years.

My sister lives here in Butler, Pennsylvania. Were you born in Pennsylvania? Our sister was born in Pennsylvania. She did not choose to be born in Pennsylvania.

She just woke up crying, screaming. She was white and she was in Pennsylvania. In no prior life or in no corridor of eternity did she put a request into God, I want to be born to those parents and I want to live in Pennsylvania and I want to be Caucasian.

That's the accident of her birth. The accident of her birth is she's white and she's from Pennsylvania. And I have a Polish mother and my father passed away a few years ago, he was Ukrainian, and I was born in Brooklyn, downtown Brooklyn.

To make a big thing about Polish or Ukrainian is ridiculous, because that's the accident of my birth. It's a form of egotism. If you make a big thing of your state or your color, it's a sign of ignorance and a huge ego.

Because don't you get it? People from France are saying France is special. People in Nigeria are waving their flag. But when we're born, we're so shaped by how we were born that it's hard sometimes to escape

and look at the world the way God sees it.

Because the way God sees the world is the way I want to see the world. I don't want to see the world through the prism of my ancestors' eyes. That was Polish-Ukrainian.

Eastern European. Stop. Now, take Christians when we're born into the kingdom of God.

Take you or Joanne. Joanne's maiden name is Cortese. Her mom is a preacher.

And she was born and raised in church. That was the accident of her birth. Now, here's the thing about when you're born in Missionary Alliance Church, Baptist Church, it doesn't matter.

Independent Church, Pentecostal Church, Presbyterian Church. We get our definitions not from the Word of God. We get our definitions from what we see by the accident of our birth.

So when Joanne was growing up, if you said the word to her, preaching, all she could relate to her is how her grandfather preached in the pulpit. That was preaching. Now, that might not have been what God intended preaching to be, but how would she know that's preaching? If you said the word prayer or worship, it might not be what God wants.

It might not be what really pleases God. But we're captive because even if you're born again as an adult, the only thing you know is that Baptist Church or that Missionary Alliance Church. You get all your definitions there, but sometimes they're not good definitions.

It's not what God wants. I don't mean to be confrontational, but let's talk Turkey. For example, when I was born and raised in that little church, my mom and dad drug me to by my ear.

They did preach the gospel there, but they didn't want a black person within 100 feet of that church. So what should I do? Glorify the tradition of my elders and be a bigot like the people were in those churches? Because a lot of Christian denominations are born in racism. They'll cheer for an athlete, a Michael Jordan or Tiger Woods and all that.

They just don't want his relatives coming to their church. That's the truth. The most segregated hour in America is still 11 o'clock Sunday morning.

Doesn't that make you cry? Brothers and sisters, look at me. How's the world going to believe when the world's smart? They look through that and say, get out of here. I knew more camaraderie and acceptance on the basketball courts.

I was a basketball player in high school and college, went to college on a basketball scholarship, played in the NCAA tournament. I knew more friendship of black, white and brown and all of that in, in the street, in the park than I knew in church. But why were they that way? Because they were that way the generation before and nobody's daring to leave, to move away from those definitions and traditions and say, God, lead me to something better that you have for me.

But you can't get to where God wants you unless you leave where you're at. And that's where the challenge is. Did you know we make a big thing about Moody? I mentioned this to Dr. Stolen, 1400 pastors that were there in Chicago last week.

We all say, Oh, DL Moody, Moody Bible Institute. What a life. The greatest evangelist of the 19th century.

His life still is influencing people. He had so much foresight. He was like Simpson, by the way, Moody said of all the preachers he ever listened to, the one that got to his heart the most was AB Simpson.

Pretty high compliment from DL Moody. But you know the first name for Moody in Chicago when, when he, with his speech impediment and his lack of formal education, he was semi illiterate. He couldn't write a letter with right punctuation.

When he started bringing in street urchins off the street because he looked at the church and it was stodgy and traditional and same old, same old. So he started gathering street urchins and pulling them into church. You know what they called him? His first name, crazy Moody.

His initials were still DL, but they called him crazy. His work with the YMCA and those street urchins. Why? Because he left where everybody else was to go to something better that God had showed him.

And then he went from crazy Moody to, Oh, DL Moody. But you know how it began. He's the first one to use music with preaching.

He had Mr. Sankey with that little pipe organ in Brooklyn in 1875, downtown Brooklyn to three, 4,000 people in a skating rink. I have a picture of it in my collection of church memorabilia and he's preaching and, and, and, and Sankey's right there on the organ. He's the first one that developed this whole thing of the word of God being sung and opening hearts.

And then the word of God being preached, going right in after it. But he started out as crazy Moody because he was willing to leave and go to a place that God was showing him. That's the challenge for you and me today.

Are you willing to leave or you want to just the same old, same old. It's like the salvation army. I tried to buy a building from them way back in the seventies.

When Carol and I first began with 15 to 18 people in the church, my first salary, the first year in the ministry, in case you don't think I can relate to anybody here was \$3,800 for the year. And the first offering we took at a Sunday morning on the Brooklyn tabernacle was \$85 was the ties in the offering. I went to buy a building after a while.

They, the salvation army has a nice building downtown Brooklyn, but it really, I ended up being too small, but to get to negotiate about it, I had to meet the commandant or whatever the officer who was in charge of it. So they told me that I could meet them. Did I say a wrong word, the commandant or the commander or whatever? Yeah.

So bear with me. Told you I didn't go to seminary. So I went downtown Brooklyn at nine 30 in the morning.

We had services at 11, then in this tiny little building that barely fit 200 people. We had real church growth. We had gone up to 130.

We thought the, you know, the world had ended and I met this officer. They, and they were having a street meeting at nine 30 in the morning on the corner of where Atlantic and Flatbush and Hanson place all come together right down the street from their, their building. So I just wait and watched.

They had the drum. They had the trombones, the Trump, the whole thing. There wasn't a person within 75 yards of us at nine 30 in the morning in downtown Brooklyn in the hood, bad neighborhood.

I didn't say anything. I just watched. So a couple of weeks later when I got to know the officer in charge and we chatted about a number of things, this building wasn't an answer for us.

I thought I got to know him well enough. I said to him, uh, brother, may I ask you something? Because I'm learning myself and all that. And I just asked questions that street meeting.

I went to, why do you do that? He said, what do you mean? Why do we do that? I said, brother, you know, the music was fine and all that. I know about general booth and the whole thing, but there wasn't a human being to hear the word of God. You were preaching.

There was nobody within the sound of your voice. Why do you do it at that time with there? Because there's nobody there. People don't stop anymore in New York when they hear trombones playing and all that.

And he looked at me, he said, brother, Jim, if you go to the keyboard, brother, that's the army way. In other words, brother, I was born in the army going to die in the arm. Well, listen, when general booth left and he was another guy, you talk about leaving, not knowing where he was going.

He looked at the established church in England and he said, the prostitutes and the whores and the drunkards in the East end of London, they're going to have a chance unless someone takes a different approach. Just like Wesley and Whitfield went out and preached in the century before to coal miners in the fields. That's why trying to get a formula from another church.

Don't do that. Don't go to these seminars and try to copy another church. Get on your knees and find out what God wants you to do.

Get on your knees and find out what God wants you to do. There are no model churches. You can be encouraged by some.

You got to find out what God wants you to do in your area, with your personality and your spiritual equipment that you bring to the team. So it begins with hearing a living word from the living God. And then you got to be able to leave.

Oh, that's where the daring part comes to leave. That's why sometimes I'm thankful. I didn't go to Bible school for years.

I've lived with an inferiority complex that I've battled with and an insecurity because I've never been trained. I'm not a Polish speaker, etc. I've never had classes in homiletics or all those things.

I've had to learn and study my own way, have a degree from college, but I've had to study theology and all of that a different way. But you know what I found out even from people telling me, they said, you know what, Jim, you've never known what to do. So you just cry out to God and ask God to lead you.

We've wasted years doing what they told us to do. And it was taught to us by preachers who never saw God bless their ministry. And it becomes a format.

It becomes a formula, becomes a rut. But as you leave, you got to be ready for one thing. You got to accept.

You got to hear. You got to leave and you got to accept. What do you have to accept? An uncertain future, an unknown future with only the assurance that God is going to be with you.

When God told Abraham, leave and go to a place, I will show you the tense of I will show you his future tense. So when Abraham went out, Hebrews tells us Abraham went out not knowing where he was going. So when Abraham was heading straight west from Mesopotamia, heading toward Canaan land, if you would have stopped his caravan along the way and said, Mr. Abraham, he was 75 years old when he left everything he knew.

If you are into controlling things, you're never going to be able to have faith because faith means you got to let go. He let go. And if you would have stopped him on the caravan and said, Mr. Abraham, where are you going? I don't know.

He just told me when I get there, he'll show me. Oh, well, that's just wonderful. You're heading toward the Hittites and the Amorites and the Hivites and Jebusites.

You're heading to some rough turf. Who will protect you? You have no army. You have no militia.

He didn't tell me who would protect me. He just said go. I know when you get there, what are you going to do? Like, where are you going to live? Are you going to farm? Are you going to work with livestock? What are you going to do? He didn't tell me.

He just said go. In other words, to walk by faith, you have to step out not knowing where you're going. All you know is that God is holding your hand.

And a lot of us who like control, you know, it really saddens you when you realize how church meetings are run now, down to the minute. I go to places where God couldn't break in the service if he knocked on the door with a hammer. Why? Because there's no space.

Brothers and sisters, where do we get that? If people want Broadway, don't come to the Brooklyn Tabernacle. Go to Broadway. Our church is not a show place.

It's a place to worship God. Do you think that in the upper room on the day of Pentecost, do you think they had a schedule? They've been praying for 10 days. Do you think when Peter went up to visit Paul at Antioch, Paul said to him, Peter, you only have 19 minutes to preach.

The chariot races are starting at 12. They are there. They got to go home and see that.

And isn't it sad, brothers and sisters talk about a lack of faith, that services are now getting shorter and shorter to appease the carnality of the people. But they're going to go home and watch a three hour football game. That's really sad.

No, that's something not to clap about. That's something to weep about. Imagine this.

So little faith that on that one hour meeting chafes them that they're going to go home and watch three, four hour rent movies go on forever. And all of that. I'm not a legalist.

I hope I'm not a legal. I don't believe I'm a legalist, but I can't understand how God would take people like that to heaven. Because why would heaven be enjoyable to them? They don't like his presence while they're here on earth.

Did you know that all of all that we're going to have in heaven is Jesus and his presence? How many are looking forward to that just to be with the Lord? Now we have to risk not knowing where we're going. If you have to, if you're like me, you want to know everything before it happens. You got to let that go.

How God's been teaching me that just step out, be willing to listen and hear a living word from the living God. Be willing, be willing to leave that which God wants you to leave because he has something better for you. I'm not talking about departing from scripture and going into craziness.

Don't misinterpret that. We judge everything by the word of God. It's the only rule of faith we have, but you understand what I mean? The application of it.

Some of us are doing stuff that we grew up around and don't haven't you noticed it's not affecting people. I grew up playing basketball. I played in Madison square garden against St. John's university and after 11 minutes in the first half, if you were losing 32 to 12, the coach would call a timeout and you would say, uh, nobody would look and say, Hey coach, look at the nice uniforms we have.

Look at the little trim we have around here on the bottom of it. Aren't we being faithful? We're out there playing. The coach would say, shh, you're getting beat.

Forget being faithful. You're not, you're not winning. It's more than being faithful.

It's being a competent minister of the new covenant where multitudes can turn to the Lord in your community and mine. If we go by faith, let's bow our heads and pray Phil and Marie, would you just go to those microphones? Spirit of the living God fall fresh on me. Jim will sit by that singing a second.

How many pastors here as I close, I'll turn it back to the leadership, but you know, I didn't come all this way and push my body with everything that's going on in my life. I didn't come here just to try to dazzle you with footwork or you know what? I love you all. I love your churches.

If your churches are blessed, I'm blessed because there are no denominations to God. There's only one body of Christ and we're all in it together. I love your fellowship, but I'm in your fellowship.

As of tonight, I have just joined the Christian missionary Alliance church. God sent me here. I'm your brother.

I want to do better for God. Don't you want to do better for God? Don't you want to cease? Don't you want to see the supernatural happen? This blessings from heaven, prayer, fervent prayer, born evangelism, doing the work of an evangelist. Like Paul told Timothy led by the spirit, expectancy among the people.

Oh, that's I'd rather live. I'd rather live two years where God is doing something than to hang around for 40 years. Just seeing nothing.

I want to be layered to see not hot nor cold. If you're a pastor and you say brother, Jim, pastor Jim symbol, I'm with you tonight. God was talking to me while you were speaking.

I want to reconsecrate my life and my ministry to God tonight. I want to say to God, God, give me the faith of father Abraham. Let me hear a living word from the living God.

I want to preach like I've never preached before because you've made your word alive in my heart. I want to be willing to leave and, and be led by you into, into places that maybe I've never been before, but you're

going to be with me and you're going to give me wisdom. I'm content to not know the future and control everything.

I just know you're going to work everything out. If you're a pastor or a worker or a pastor's wife, look, it doesn't matter if 20 people come forward or 2000, it doesn't matter if God's talking to you and you'd like to close the meeting by praying with me, would you get up from your seat right now and just come to the frontier all over the building. Everyone who wants to begin a fresh with God.

Come forward. Lift both your hands up wherever you are right now and sing break. Fill me.

Nashville, Tennessee. You've laid your hand upon us and you've set us in the ministry. These are my brothers and sisters, their chosen vessels.

You've put your hand upon them to do work for you, Lord, but we were like that person in the Bible who said to you, Lord, I believe, help my unbelief. We want more faith. Lord, increase our faith.

Lord, increase our faith. Increase my faith. Lord, let me see more of the invisible world, the way you look at things and not just the, not just being conformed to the physical world by the, by the senses, Lord, that hold me back from really serving you the way you want.

Take away fear from us, Lord. Give us boldness, Lord. I lift my voice with my brothers and sisters.

Give us boldness, Lord, to do your work, your way, with your power, for your glory, Lord. Help us to hear a living word from the living God, Lord. Help us to live in our Bibles, but make it alive by your spirit, Lord.

Make it alive, Lord. We don't need an intellectual word only. We need a spiritual anointed word, Lord.

For faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. We ask you to give us the courage to leave things that we need to leave. Thought patterns, traditions.

Lord, this is daring stuff, but we, we put our hand into your hand today. You're not going to let us down, Lord. We're not afraid as long as you're with us, Lord.

But we just don't want to take up space, Lord, and keep doing it and just say we're faithful. We want to see a breakthrough so your name is glorified. In small towns, in cities, in, in, in urban centers, Lord.

I ask you to bless every church represented in this room. Let there be an explosion, Lord, in every church for the glory of God. Let there be an explosion in the pulpit.

An explosion in prayer and worship, Lord. An explosion in evangelism. Show us how to get the word out to people, Lord.

It's not General Booth's day. It's not A.B. Simpson's day. This is the day that the Lord has made and we rejoice and we're glad in it, Lord.

But lead us, oh Lord, please lead us in the way that we should go. Give us the courage to leave worn out things, dead traditions, pockets of fear and insecurity, mechanical services that do nothing for anyone, Lord. Finally, Lord, give us the assurance that you're with us so that we don't have to over control things and have to know all the answers.

Lord, I've been guilty of that. I ask you to teach me to just trust you, even in the dark, Lord, when I don't know what it's, what's going to happen next. But make us men and women of faith.

When these people go back, Lord, on Saturday, I guess, to their churches, I'm asking Lord for an explosion this Sunday, all across this country, an explosion, Lord. Something's going to happen, Lord, because we're trusting you. Why wouldn't you do that for us, Lord? We're not asking for money.

We're not asking for bigger cars. We're asking for the glory of God. We're asking for the anointing of the Holy Spirit, Lord.

Why wouldn't you do that for us, Father, when you promised the Holy Spirit and you told us without you we could do nothing? So Lord, I stand on your word, the very promise that you made. You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. We're trusting you for that.

And great things are going to happen. Great things are going to happen in the Brooklyn Tabernacle. I can believe it, Lord.

I believe it because you're a good God, not because of Jim Cimbala, let his name perish, and let the name of the Brooklyn Tabernacle perish, but let the name of Jesus receive all glory and honor and praise, Lord. That's how we pray tonight, Father. We're just talking to you like children would to their earthly father.

We're asking you to do it. Let the work begin in us, Lord. Wherever you're standing in the auditorium, join hands with the person next to you.

If you could lift the piano, please, and the house, and then my monitors, and the voices together. Let's sing it. Now with our hands together, here's what I'd like you to do.

We do this all the time at our church. Maybe it'll be an encouragement to you tonight. If you are a lady, when I tell you, I want you to turn to the nearest lady and grab her by her hands in front.

I want you to begin praying for each other's lives, ministries, churches, whatever. Pray out loud at the same time. God will hear everybody.

God's amazing. He can hear everybody praying. If you're a brother, I want you to turn when I tell you to the nearest brother, wrap your arms around them or get a two or three together or hold hands in front of you.

But Jesus said, my house shall be called a house of prayer. Singing is great. Preaching is wonderful, but God's house is going to be a house of prayer.

I don't care where you're standing in the building. If you've never done this before, don't be shy. All we're going to do is pray one for another.

As the Bible says, would you turn right now? Ladies, find a lady and begin to pray. Brothers, find a brother and begin to pray. Come on, just lock your hands together and begin to pray.

I thank you all for being such a great audience. I am so happy that I'm here with you this week. I want you to know I love you.

I hope I've conveyed the burden that God put on my heart tonight in the right way. I hope nothing I've said has been misunderstood. I want more God.

How many of you want more of God in our churches? Let's put our hands together and just give God a standing ovation. Father, Father, we love you. Father, we love you.

We worship and adore you. Glorify your name in all the earth. Father, we love you.

We worship and adore you. Glorify your name in all the earth. Everyone now.

Glorify your name in all the earth.

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