

# What My Wife Has Modeled for Me

by Jim Cymbala

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*Jim Cymbala highlights the importance of humility, unity, and quality in ministry, drawing lessons from his wife's example and addressing the challenges facing the church today.*

**Duration:** 50:53

**Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 2:1

**Topics:** "Women Ministry"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares his experience of preaching the gospel and witnessing the power of the Holy Spirit. He talks about the exhaustion and dedication required in his ministry, where he would preach multiple services a day for years. Despite his initial struggles as a preacher, he emphasizes the importance of preaching with the demonstration of the Holy Spirit's power. He also highlights the impact of personal testimonies in leading people to Christ, sharing a powerful story of a former crack addict who found redemption through Jesus.

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## Transcript

I'm not going to pick a verse, but I'm going to refer to several. I would title this, Things My Wife Modeled For Me. Let me start by saying this, right now the statistics are not good for the Christian church in America.

Let's save hype up talk and faith talk and let's just talk reality here. The major denominations like Southern Baptist Convention, Assemblies of God, others are in negative growth for the last 8-10 years. Negative growth after 9-11.

Negative growth. Southern Baptist official and Assembly of God official told me they have more empty pulpits right now than any time in the history of their denomination. Right now in America 1,500 ministers are leaving the ministry every month.

That's a focus on the family figure. 1,500 a month. While you're rejoicing today and eating lunch and going out with other folks, hopefully and making new friends, 50 are going to bite the dust.

50 are going to quit. Why? Discouragement, not knowing what to do, nobody getting saved, nobody getting baptized, mega churches sucking people away from middle and small size churches, personal problems, personal failures. But that's a stat that's true.

Then another one that George Barnard just said, for every 10 ministers who join the ministry now, only one retires still in the ministry. Nine are selling insurance or doing something else. They opted out or they're out.

That hurts me as a pastor because it's hard being a pastor today. It's hard being a minister of music. It's hard being a worship leader.

Satan's powers, you know, there's a greater hardness now in our country against religion. How many would agree with that, right? The media, how many know the media is more against Christianity now than ever before? Wave your hand if you know what I'm talking about. So it's harder now.

And you know I grew up as a basketball player, an all-city basketball player in New York. I went to college on a basketball scholarship. And we had a scoreboard and we didn't play by faith.

We played. We played by faith that we would do well. But you have a scoreboard and the scoreboard forces you to change things.

If you're losing 28 to 12 after nine minutes of the game, when you call a timeout and you come back, the coach doesn't say, wow, aren't these uniforms nice with the trim here on the trunks? No. The coach says, it's 28 to 12, we're losing. We got to change what we're doing.

We're going to full court press. We're going to slow the game down. No, we're going to speed the game up.

I was a point guard. We're going to do this. We're going to do that.

But we're not going to keep losing. No, you will not beat me. I will change.

I will do something. And that industry does that. Businesses do that.

People trying to sell things do that. But the church is slow to do that. Because we're just born and raised this way.

We're going to die this way. Yeah, but it's not bringing much blessing to anyone. That's okay.

I was born in Nazarene. I'm going to die in Nazarene, you know, or whatever. I'm not picking on any denomination.

It could just... Isn't that the way a lot of people think? That's not what I saw growing up. I know, but what is... We're not supposed to go by what you saw growing up or what I saw growing up or what Alvin saw growing up. We're supposed to go by the Word of God.

And the Word of God says that if we do this thing God's way, preaching God's message, lifting up Jesus Christ with the help of the Holy Spirit, God will add a blessing. There will be lives changed because that's the power that there is in the gospel. Paul says, I'm not ashamed of it.

It's the power of God to everyone who believes. So you being here, you're involved. I saw when Carol asked how many are leaders, singers, worship leaders, directors of music, choir members are here.

You folks are involved in ministry. But being involved in ministry is not enough. We have to have quality in the ministry.

Did you ever notice in 1 Corinthians, Paul says at the end of the day, Alvin Slaughter, Jim Cimbala, Carol Cimbala, Michael Archibald, everybody here that's involved in ministry, we're going to stand at the judgment seat of Christ and be judged for the quality of our work, not the quantity, the quality, not how long you've been doing it. It's the quality of the work. Paul says, God helped me to be a master builder and be careful how anybody builds on top of the foundation that I laid, which was Jesus Christ.

So it's the quality of the work. Not I held the fort for 40 years. That's important.

You need steadfastness, endurance, but it's the quality of the work. And that's why we go back to the word of God. And you know, we want you to leave encouraged by the word of God, encouraged by be singing with the choir, encouraged by the meetings on Sunday, encouraged by brother Sidney, who's anointed by Alvin, who's anointed.

We want you to go back and do it better for Jesus Christ. And if you think we care what denomination you're in, we've learned a long time ago from the word of God. There are no denominations to God.

Do I get a witness here? Somebody put their hands together. God does not recognize any Baptist. There's only one Baptist, John the Baptist.

He died a long time ago. He's gone. There are no assemblies of God.

There are no charismatics. There's no evangelicals. These are names not found in the Bible.

We've made them up and they hurt us. Why do they hurt us? Because we don't care about the other group. We get a party spirit.

We go to church where people brainwash us into thinking about our group. But this is the way we do it. My local church is the way I do it.

I'm black. We're you know, we're in my I'm in my blackness. I'm in my whiteness.

I'm into my southernness. And the angels are weeping because folks are going to hell in a handbasket. And we're talking about what group we're in.

My goodness, that's sad. And I know it firsthand. Because when I was playing basketball, and a substitute went in and he scored, I was leaping off the bench.

Even if he substituted for me, he scored. That means we were winning. But we don't have that attitude in the church.

It's whether it's our group. And I've talked to people, let's say I go to, I was just in Memphis, preaching at Bellevue Baptist Church and where Adrian Rogers pastor and I spoke there on a midweek service and God was there and that pastor, I admire him, I encourage him, he's a new friend. And if I go to another denomination, and they go, Well, how are things going, Brother Jim, where you been lately? Well, I was just over in Memphis, and God is doing something good in that church.

And I'm excited about it, let's say and, and you know, and I looked up in the choir, and here were Hispanics and, and African Americans lifting their hands in the choir, part of the choir mixed in with that. And we know Memphis, if you live near Memphis, you've been in Memphis, Memphis is a tough city. It's racially divided, like black and white.

And we're talking God is love. And everybody like Dr. King, they're all divided on Sunday morning, 11 o'clock. It's sad.

It's sad. But some of us are so used to it doesn't even bother us anymore. And I tell that person, the reaction, you know, what happened in the meeting, and I could just it's happened to me 1000 times, they just look at me like, why are you telling us? We're not Baptist.

You're not Baptist. Are we Christians or not? What are we doing this for for Baptist for a denomination for the Brooklyn Tabernacle? I thought this is about Jesus. I thought we're all on the same team.

If your church and your choir is doing good, guess what I rejoice for you. I don't care where you come from. It's irrelevant.

I don't care your color. God doesn't recognize any colors. Because if you strip the color off, we're all the same on the inside.

We cry, we hurt, we rejoice. So we want you to know we're rooting for you. We want you to root for us.

And we're all on one team. How many are all on one team? And since we're on one team, I want you to just turn around and high five somebody like you're on their team. Come on.

No handshake, just high five. We're on the same team, brother. So black, white, brown, Hispanic, all that stuff.

It's nonsense and denomination, just total nonsense. We got a job to do. Look at the country.

Look at the look at the moral decline in our country, decade after decade. And the Republicans don't have the answer. The Democrats don't have the answer.

That's a joke. We're the salt of the earth. We're the light of the world.

We're the church of Jesus Christ. The White House is not supposed to win people of Christ. You and I are supposed to win them.

The church grew in a decadent Roman empire in the book of Acts, when at times and during the book of Acts, people like Caligula and Nero were the emperors, cross-dressers, homosexuals, no prayer in schools, no written Bibles, no public buildings for 300 years. And they turned the world upside down. And what are you and I complaining about? Secular humanists and all this stuff.

My goodness, it's all a diversion. It's a dream. We're in denial.

We're in denial. Let's get it on. Let's be what God wants us to be.

We want you to go back on fire for the Lord Jesus Christ. Ah, but then we got to do ministry God's way. Not the way you saw your pastor growing up or what I saw growing up.

That's the problem. Our churches are cultural. They're black churches.

My goodness. White churches with certain traditions so predictable, whether they're loud or noisy or whether they're quiet. It's so predictable.

It's boring because Christian church is not supposed to be boring. It's supposed to be exciting. Jesus is alive.

Come on. Is Jesus alive or is Jesus not alive? Who's getting saved? What's happening? The presence of the Lord, the presence of the Lord, things happening. Well, we don't do things that way.

I'm not interested how you do it or how I do it or what I saw growing up in the little church that I grew up in. They were very strict. Women couldn't cut their hair.

There was no makeup, but they wouldn't want a black person within a hundred yards of the church. Should I follow what I saw growing up? You think my wife and I would be in downtown Brooklyn if I followed the tradition of my elders? Of course not. I'm not bound to that.

My elders didn't die for me. No denomination died for you. Christ died for you.

We belong to Jesus Christ. White prejudice is bad and black prejudice is just as bad. And I've been around both of it and seen it.

It's ugly. Hispanics, whatever. And denominational stuff.

We got to be just set free from that. Now, my wife has modeled for me three important things that I've watched all her life. Since we were married and after just a couple of years, we were in the ministry and she was way ahead of me.

She was a pastor's daughter. She'd been more in church than I had. And I was this college basketball player not knowing what I was doing.

My sermons were so bad when I went in the ministry, I fell asleep while I was preaching. Forget the congregation. People had trouble sleeping at night, we would just give them CDs of my messages and just they'd go right out.

Come on, Alvin, you remember that. So, I want to tell you three things. There's a lot of things in the New Testament.

You study the life of Paul. You see all kinds of things that are important in ministry. But I want to tell you three that Carol has exhibited.

I've never done this before. But I just feel this is appropriate because you've come here, most of you, because you've been blessed by the choir, by her writing, by her arranging. She has perfect pitch.

She has a lot of natural gifts. She's never been trained musically, can't read or write music technically like a lot of you can. Won six Grammy Awards and can even use one book.

I think Word has sold more than two million pieces of sheet music, books, octavos, two million they've sold of her work. And she can't read any of them. And we never used any of them.

She could if she followed it and do it, but she does it all by here and by here. So, let me tell you a couple things about the ministry. I don't care what you do.

You ask God to apply this to your life because she's encouraged me and modeled this for me. First of all, in all the time my wife started with nine voices in the choir in this little rundown building we were in, two

were tone deaf and they would, and then when the church grew and the choir grew, they never resigned from the choir. They stayed there the whole time.

That's the truth. They stayed for more than 20 years, tone deaf. They needed radar to find the melody.

They didn't know what was going on. But back in that day when the church was little, if you could walk up on the platform, you could sing in the choir. There were no, she tests them now, interviews them, but has vocal tests now and all that.

Then there was none of that back then. It was just, but from the beginning to this moment, my wife, this is good for all of us. I'm not making my wife the model of those.

She's modeled for me here in these things, but we're going to reflect it to the Bible. Obviously, you don't want to follow Carol's symbol. You want to follow the word of God.

But Paul does say, imitate me as I've imitated Christ. She has never once that I've observed sought attention and tried to be the center of attraction. Not once.

Listen, I live with her. Not once. She never had grand dreams for the choir.

She's never wanted to be acknowledged She never wanted an award. Never heard her say, Oh, I hope I win that. Never heard it once.

And I'm talking about in the privacy of my home. So when God sees you don't want something, then he'll give it to you. If he sees that you don't want notoriety and you don't want to be famous, he can give you a notoriety because you could deal with it.

But if he sees that you want it, you want your name mentioned, you want your church in lights, you want your choir or your music in lights. If you want that attention, you want to be famous. You want to be a star.

Watch it. Because whoever lifts himself up, God says, I'll bring you down. But whoever humbles himself, what does God say? I'll raise you up.

And that's a good lesson for all of us is a lot of preachers want to be famous. They don't want to be a blessing so much. They don't want to change people's lives.

They want fame and money and the perks that come with that. And they will sell their soul. Some of them, unfortunately, to be well known.

They want to know other famous preachers. They want to go to the White House. They want to rub shoulders with people who are really important.

I've never seen that once in my life. Not once. She just goes about her business and wants Christ to be glorified.

Did you notice the words that were chosen on the screen at the beginning? Not to emulate her, but to draw closer to Christ. Don't you think we all need a good injection of that, all of us? Because pride comes naturally to us. Pride is not something you have to teach people.

People, we're just proud naturally by our fallen nature. And that's an insidious thing because do you realize that it's pride that changed Lucifer from the most beautiful of all God's angels into Satan himself?

Because your heart was lifted up with pride, the Old Testament says, you were cast down out of heaven. Now, Lucifer got his beauty from God.

Just like a lot of you have your gift. Any gift you have comes from God. For every good and perfect gift comes from whom? God.

Whatever you have. You sing good. You lead well.

You have a good pitch. You hear harmony parts. You can direct well.

You know how to sing. You can riff. Whatever your gifting is, it came from God.

Do you think God's going to share his glory with you? Does that sound right? Do you think God is going to share his glory, the glory of Christ with Brooklyn Tabernacle, that name? Let that name perish. Let it be trampled on. Let everybody forget it ever existed, but let Jesus be glorified.

And brothers and sisters, here's what I've seen, not just in Carol, but I've seen in the Bible and I've seen it through church history. Whenever God sees someone who wants to give him all the glory, he will help you in ways you can't even imagine. There will be an anointing.

There will be a provision. There will be open doors because God says, oh, it's not about you. It's about me.

You want to see my name lifted up. Angels go and help them. Holy spirit go and help them.

Come on. Let's all put our hands together. Say amen.

So Paul says, we don't preach ourselves. We preach Christ. We don't preach our denomination.

We don't preach, join our church. Our church is special. It's not, it's just another church.

Get over it. It's just another church. It's all about Jesus.

Your church, my church won't change a soul. A relationship with Jesus Christ will change anyone. And wherever it happens, wherever it happens, God will get the glory.

But a lot of our ministry is not so much to build up Christ and his kingdom is to build up our church. Churches can become idols. Your choir can become an idol.

I know this sounds radical to some of you, but I'm telling you the truth. What the Bible says, Paul never talks about some group. In fact, he says, this is a sign of carnality.

One says I'm a Paul. One says I'm of Cephas. One says I'm Apollos.

Did any of those guys die for you? Are you not carnal first Corinthians? Are you not carnal? What we call carnal is someone, you know, uh, uh, drinking alcohol or, you know, involved with what we call worldly habits. But Paul says, no carnality is you're trying to get your own name glorified rather than just Jesus Christ. So I want to encourage all of you.

Do you want more anointing? Do you want more strength from God? You want more creativity from God? Then like Thomas a campus says in the imitation of Christ, seek to be obscure, seek that nobody will know who you are because you compared to Jesus. It's not a good comparison. I'll be honest with you.

Me compared to Jesus. I want people to notice me and Jesus died for my sins and rose again from the dead. And he's the son of God seated at the right end of the father.

But I don't want to give him all the glory I've noticed. One of the reasons God has blessed my wife is that she's been taught by the Holy spirit. Make it about Jesus, not about yourself.

She uses other people's music. She recognizes other people's talent. I, I know of a certain church has a good choir and the minister of music is a good person and all of that.

But every album, uh, for a while there, it had to be written by this minister of music. Well, that minister of music wasn't that good as songwriter. Maybe God gave him one or two good songs, but see it had to be by this minister of music.

You know, this is my production. My wife's always like, well, that's a good song. Someone else wrote it.

Praise God. Let's put it on the album. In fact, I can't get to hear the song she wrote in this church.

I want to protest that publicly right now. Alvin is here. I cannot wait.

I would imagine Alvin you're saying I'm clean while you're here. I've been waiting to hear I'm clean. We've never heard it because if she wrote it, she says, nah, it's not that good.

That's the truth. Anybody here ever hear the song? He's been faithful. Lift your hand.

If you heard, he'd been faithful. Do you like it? I like it too, but I'll never hear it here. I'll never hear it here.

Music department, they'll back me up. We can't get her to pick her songs. She's going to pick someone else's songs, but God watches that and God says, oh, it's like that.

Then I'll really help you. Whether you're a preacher, teacher, minister of music, soloist, you want people to draw attention to your voice, fine. The Holy Spirit's leaving town.

If you want people to be conscious of Jesus, the Holy Spirit will help you. If you want to do riffs and show them you can really sing, fine. You're on your own because the Holy Spirit is not here to help you glorify your voice, I can assure you, your talent.

But if you're there to just, God, don't even let them notice who I am, just let them be conscious of Jesus. Did you know what? I just got an email. Someone sent me an email.

They got saved up in the balcony during the choir rehearsal before a service. Did you hear what I just said? They said, I want to thank God. I came to your church and got saved, but it wasn't from your preaching and it wasn't through the service.

God convicted me and I gave my heart to Christ while they were warming up. How many are happy? God's ways are not our ways. God is something else.

Number two, number two, I've observed my wife all these years. She has, she's not been perfect on it. No one is, but she's always tried to be led by the Holy Spirit.

She tries to feel in her heart after what God wants her to do and try to follow that. Now, look up here for me for a second. The Bible is our only rule of faith and doctrine.

Am I correct? Everything that happens in the church has to be judged by the word of God. There's some manifestation or some weird thing going on that's not in the Bible. It's best to just stop it.

Someone said, I have a revelation, an angel talked to me and all that. If it's not, you listen, I'm listening to you. Go ahead and tell me what the angel said.

Then if it's not in the Bible, remember what Paul said, if an angel comes and preaches another gospel, let the angel be cursed. So any preacher, you know, this is what God showed me. This is the vision I have and all that hyped up stuff.

You listen to it, but you judge it by the word of God. Some of the fundraising techniques that you hear is just people must not know their Bible because they're getting played. They're getting conned by these charlatans because they just know you don't know the Bible enough or people don't know the Bible enough to say, that's not Jesus.

That's not apostle Paul. That's not the teaching of the Bible. But the problem with this is this Bible does not tell you what's the next song you should teach your choir.

You will not find that in that book, nor who you should marry. If you're single here, all it tells you is that you should marry a believer. But there's a lot of them out there.

Which one is the question, right? Won't find that in the Bible. Somebody has a call to the mission field. You won't find that in the Bible.

What country should you go to? It's not there. You won't find it. These are non-moral decisions, which are very important.

They have to do with the will of God. You won't find them in the Bible. So churches and denominations that downplay the power of the Holy Spirit, they're in the soup.

They got a real problem because they turn to computers and they turn to all kinds of, you know, there's an invasion in the church now of the corporate world. Corporate thinking has invaded the church. So people are making decisions, not by the Holy Ghost, not led by the Holy Spirit.

I don't even believe that anymore. You got to use your brain. You got to copy what, you know, Apple does.

AT&T. You got to be up with this stuff. Well, I'm sure there's room for using all the wisdom we can get from anyone, but Carol has always believed in the Holy Spirit leading her.

She might practice. I've seen this happen. She practiced a song on a practice night and said, we're going to sing that song and this other song.

And then in the meeting, the texture of the meeting, the spirit of the meeting, she'll change and sing something. They haven't even practiced in two months. Why? Because I feel that's what we're supposed to sing because meetings aren't supposed to be mechanical.

They're supposed to be the leading of the Holy Spirit. Don't you think if God could lead the Israelites for 40 years in the wilderness, couldn't he lead you and me through one service? Do I get a witness here now? I'm not talking about, look, I'm not talking about this weird stuff. And you know, the Holy Ghost just showed me that 10 people supposed to give \$5,000 and, and all that other hyped up these con artists there on TV.

But I'm talking now about being led by the spirit. Paul says in, in the book of acts, Luke writes and says, uh, so Paul and us, we wanted to go into Asia and preach the gospel, but Jesus forbid us the spirit of Jesus forbid us. So then we were going to go to Bithynia, you know, Bithynia needs the gospel.

But again, the spirit said, no, well, they're not selling crack. They're not, they're not, they're not involved in drug trafficking. They want to preach the gospel, but the Holy spirit says, no, that's for someone else to do there.

I got a different plan for you. Do you believe in that today? Do you, how many believe the Holy spirit can still lead us? Well, if he can't, if he can't, what are we going to do? What am I supposed to preach on this Sunday? I don't know, but I know the whole, what would Jesus speak this Sunday with all of you here? Plus the thousands and thousands of come in our congregation. What would Jesus speak about? I'm trying to find that out because there is a message that's right for that Sunday, right? Paul tells us, Paul tells Timothy, preach the word, but what word there's 66 books in there.

That's a lot of word, right? And Carol has always believed. And I would encourage you follow your heart, get close to God and follow the leading of your heart. She's going to do what she feels to do.

She has had Sundays where thinking back over the years, it just came to me now. She said to me at times, the choir is not singing today. And I said, why they're not ready.

That's happened. And I don't say to her, well, guess what woman you have them sing. No, I don't.

If she feels that God doesn't want the choir to sing that God has something else to do in that meeting. And so not to make it about ourselves, to make it focused on Jesus, to take a humble place. Number two, to want to be led by the Holy Spirit.

Now, a great spiritual writer once said, if you want to be set on errands by Jesus, you got to live close to him. And that's a challenge to all of us. Not fake leading, not emotionalism, not charismatic excesses and all of that stuff, but the real true Holy Spirit who leads us, who shows us what to do.

I'll just I feel impressed here to tell you this. One day, many years ago, we were in another building. Service began.

I went to sit in the front row. I wanted to hear the choir sing and see them instead of sitting on the side or wherever we were that church. So I was listening to choir sing and a former drug addict named Calvin Hunt was there and he was singing a song doing the lead solo with the choir singing.

I sat down. Carol had told me I'm going to do two songs. I want to do to that song, another song.

So I went and sat down. All of you listening to me, you can believe this or not believe this. I'm going to tell you what happened and then you sort it out with God.

So I'm sitting there and the song is about a third of the way through. And suddenly the Holy Spirit starts to bear down on me and say, get up and preach the gospel now. Tell them I love them.

Tell them now. Make them come to me now. Tell them now.

And I'm going, no. First of all, there's a song going on. Number two, she got another song and we haven't even taken the offering.

God, don't you even God, don't you know how this works? I mean, you have the announcements, you have the offering, you know, that's the way we do it. But now it's getting stronger. Get up now.

Go up now. Go up now. And I try to resist it.

And I felt pain in my innermost being pain from God, the Holy Spirit, because when you grieve him or quench him, it can get bad on you. Right. So my heart starts to beat because I don't like being weird.

Some people, some I mean by this, there's some people think that to be led by the Holy Spirit, you act strange. But some people who act strange are just strange. How many say amen to that? They're just strange.

That's not the Holy Spirit focus. That boy is just strange. So.

I'm sitting there and I can't the meeting isn't even a half hour old. So I I can't fight it off. So the song is ending and I walk up on the platform and my wife just looks at me like, you know, I have another song, but she sensed.

No, this is something's going on here. I grabbed the soloist before he can walk away and I said, Calvin, you got five minutes, tell people how Jesus changed you. He lived in a crack houses, blues, his whole life apart, ended up living in a dog house.

Hopeless crack addict. You know, they say here in the city, I was he's the first one I ever heard it from. He says, you know, crack has a voice.

And when you're a crack addict, when it calls, you come in. It's not. Do you want to come? Might you come? You're coming when it calls.

He takes a few minutes. I grabbed the microphone from him, choir still standing, and I make an invitation. Preach the gospel in less than five minutes.

My heart's pounding. I want to be obedient. I make an invitation for those who want to receive Christ.

People start flying out of their seats and coming to the front. Some kid comes out of the balcony, standing over to my right. He's all broken up and crying.

And all these people are there. So I tell the people, all right, I pray over them. They pray out loud, the sinner's prayer, receive Christ.

They go back to their seats. I go, well, what do we do now here? That took a lot of time. But you know what? If you want a show, you should go to Broadway, not to a church.

Churches shouldn't have shows. I go to these places now. They have all the, you know, the script of the meeting.

This will take two minutes. That will take one minute. Your sermon is fourteen minutes.

That's got to keep it moving. You think? Exactly. That's a good word.

You program God right out of it. God's not fitting into my program. I'm supposed to fit into God's program.

Come on. How many believe that? Say amen, right? Well, brother, you can't do that. You can't do that because if the meeting goes too long, the people won't come.

The cowboy game starts at one o'clock. They got to be there to see the Falcons or whatever. Then what kind of church you got? No, I'm telling you the truth.

They don't want to be in the presence of Jesus. Then why would God punish them and send them to heaven if they don't want to be in his presence? No, look at me. Look at me.

If they if you don't want to be in God's presence here on earth, why would you think heaven is great? There's nothing in heaven but God, his presence. But you know what? We've institutionalized backslidenness. So we're making meetings in many places either based on the lowest carnal denominator and fitting it into what the people want or because they're so into money.

We've changed the gospel and just talking money, money, money. You watch Christian television, money, money, money, money, money, money. I don't see that in the Bible.

I see a lot of other subjects, but no, no, because they're just all about people. You give the money to me and you'll get more money because they're into money and that's how they're running it. So I present the gospel in these few minutes.

People come, people go back. We take the offering. The meeting goes on.

I really couldn't preach long that day. I just spent all my energy at that moment. Go up to this room they had for me to rest before the next service, then do another service, then go home.

You're so tired, you want to feel like you'd be in a body bag and just go home tired. Back then, we were doing three services a day. For six years, we did four services a day, each two hours long.

Imagine that, 9, 12, 3, and 6. Choir would sing at 3 and 6. That's why I look so old. I just turned 28 years old about two months ago. No, they didn't kill me.

So my daughter comes into my office later, two days later, and tells me that a guy calls from Texas and tells her this story among what he was called for. He actually called to try to get music for a song, but he found out that my daughter was my daughter, that the one answering the phone was my middle daughter, Susan. So the story is, he's a businessman, Alvin, and he's coming from Dallas, I think, with his wife, but he sets a trap for his son.

His son's not serving God. His son is away from God. His son is out there.

They can't get through to him. So they say, Son, come, this teenager, come to New York with us. We've got a business trip.

But on Saturday, we'll take you to a Broadway show, and you know, you be with us. And secretly, they're praying, and they've agreed, but then we'll bring him to church on Sunday. So they do their thing on the weekend, and they're getting ready to come from the hotel in the city.

They check out. And when he looks at his ticket, he goes, Oh, no, we're going to the three o'clock service. The secretary made a mistake.

She got a flight. We're not going to be able to stay for the whole service. We're going to have to leave.

Maybe we'll hear the choir, but I need my son to hear the word. I want to, you know. So he tells my daughter that the choir sings one song.

They got their eyes on the clock. And then, like, your daddy flashes up onto the platform, grabs the microphone, tells the soloist to tell his testimony. And then your dad makes an altar call to service.

He's even 35 minutes old. And he said, My son was the first one to get up and come to the front. He was that.

He was that guy crying over there. Wait. Went back to his seat.

They waited for him. They ran right out of the building, caught a cab, went to LaGuardia, flew back to Dallas. And the boy they were looking at wasn't the boy they brought.

God had changed him. But you know how that all happened? You say, I don't believe that. That's emotionalism.

That's listen. Did you know Jesus will change a service for one boy? Won't he? Come on. Let's all thank God now out loud.

Let's praise him out loud. So I wanted to suggest to you to follow Carol's example. Ask God to help you to be led by the Holy Spirit.

Everyone right now who has a child, everyone close your eyes. You have a child away from God. And while I was talking, the Holy Spirit gave you a burden for your own child, because you know how those parents felt.

Just stand up right now. You got a son or a daughter, grandson or granddaughter away from God. They're not in good shape.

Stand up and lift your hands up. Lift your hands up to almighty God. Father God, we pray right now for every son and daughter that's being represented here.

And I believe your Holy Spirit gave a burden of prayer to some moms and dads out here and grandparents. And we're going to do what your word says, God. You said in the day of trouble, call upon me and I will answer you.

And I'll show you things you can't even imagine. God, bring these sons back. Bring these daughters back.

Spiritual children, God, we want to see you do miracles, Lord, so that the name of your son Jesus might be glorified. Get them away from the circle of friends they're in. If they're involved in drugs, clean them out.

Do whatever it takes. Send somebody to them today, even while this conference is going on. Send some man or woman of God to deliver the word of the Lord to them.

Wake them up in a dream like you did our oldest girl Chrissy. Do whatever you have to do. But we're believing you for our children.

Come on, everybody. Believe with me. We're believing you for our children, Lord.

They're going to come back. We dedicated them, and now they're going to come back and serve you, Lord. Lift that burden so these folks can enjoy the conference.

For we pray it in Christ's name. And everybody said, can we just put our hands together and thank God for what he's going to do. Come on.

Just don't pray. Believe and worship. Believe and worship.

I believe you, God. I believe you, God. Come on, everyone, clap your hands.

I believe you, God. Tell them I believe you, God. I believe in you, God.

So to take the low position and want to lift up Christ, to want to be led by the Holy Spirit, you'll make mistakes. I've made the most. Carol's been a better wife than I've been a husband.

She's been a better mother than I've been a father. We all fail at so many things, but when God sees you want to be led by the Holy Spirit, he will help you. Oh, but Pastor Simba, sometimes I don't know what to do.

Just tell God I don't know what to do, and he'll help you. You'll learn to hear his voice. Lastly, my wife, this church, we believe in the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

We believe that music changes no one. I am frightened by anyone who says do that song. That song works.

I'm frightened of people like that because no song works. God works. Now, do songs stir up emotions? Can you do an American medley and stir up patriotic fervor? Yes.

Can you do certain emotional things and move people's emotions? Yes, but you won't change them. You won't change. Only the Holy Spirit breaks the yoke.

You'll notice the choir has taken on the spirit of my of my wife. I say this for the glory of God is they don't they won't strut up here tonight when you meet them. They don't think they're the best anything.

They're not the best sounding choir. They they try to get their parts and learn the best they can, but they're like, well, God, we're going to do our best, but please come Holy Spirit. And we tell the choir members before they come in the choir, someone on this Sunday might be sitting up in the top of this vast balcony up there.

Two thousand people fit just up in that balcony. And they might have just tested positive HIV. They got a death sentence in their mind.

And maybe this is the only meeting that you have a shot to tell them about Jesus. Do you think perfect singing even Pavarotti is going to change them? You think somebody doing a riff or a chord change? You think Jason, who's a masterful player, you think some chord that he'll hit will change him? No, only Jesus, the gospel, the power of the Holy Spirit breaks the shackles. Do we all believe that? Say amen.

So Carol is going to get them to sing the best they can, but that's not what the goal is. No, if you want to hear perfect singing. First of all, if God wanted to hear perfect singing, he just had the angels strike up a song.

Angels, all the tenors are on their note with the angels. Here, not so often is all the tenors on their note or the altos or the sopranos. No, it's God uses foolish things to confound the wise.

God, God's not looking for slickness. He's God. What would he be interested in slickness for? How could you out slick almighty God? No.

My wife has always believed, and that's why she prays with the choir, that the choir will only be effective that when they're singing songs that glorify Christ that are based on the word of God, that the Holy Spirit will come and he will do his work. He'll encourage people to worship God who are depressed and ready to give up. He'll make somebody feel their inadequacy and put their trust in Christ.

He'll he'll convict the center of the way they're living. God can do amazing things, can he? When what we do is anointed by the Holy Spirit. So I just want to encourage you because she's modeled that for me all these years we've been married all the years she's been doing that.

I've never seen her push herself in the front. I've never I've always seen her try to be led by the Holy Spirit. Did you know that she was heading to a studio one time to do an album in Nashville? And let's say she needed 10 songs.

She only had nine. And people were saying to her, no, no, get this song, use this song. She had all kinds of songs she could put.

She said, no, I'm not doing any of those songs. And I was pressing her and saying, Carol, you've got to have 10 songs. We're doing an album.

No, that's not the song. So she met our then organist like the day before she left. And they were talking, I don't know how it happened.

And he went up on the organ and played a song that he had heard 25 years before. Only a look at Jesus, only a look. And she said, good, that's a song for the album.

Choir had never sung it. She heard it once. And I hear people tell me all the time, oh, I love that song.

If they only knew how it got on the album. Because we can be led by the Holy Spirit. And then when we do it, when you lead, when you sing, we need the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

And if we're humble by God's grace, and if we want to be led by God, he will anoint us. He'll help us. Here's a verse for anybody here as a preacher or a teacher.

Here's a verse I've been pondering. Alvin, this is a good one for you, not only for your life and ministry, but to share with other people. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 2, verses 1 to 4, he's talking about his ministry.

And he says, now you'll remember that my preaching was not with wise and enticing words. The NIV has it, my preaching was not with wise and persuasive words. What? That's what every seminary is teaching, how to speak wisely and persuasively.

He boasts, no it was not with wise and persuasive words. But my preaching came with a demonstration of the power of the Holy Spirit. So that your faith would not stand in the wisdom and cleverness of men, but in the power of God.

Now think of that. He boasts, my preaching. This is not screaming in a microphone, working people up in a frenzy.

That's not the anointing. Anointing can be loud or quiet or whatever. My preaching was not with wise and persuasive words.

But with a demonstration of the power of the Holy Spirit. Now nowhere does it indicate, Paul stopped every three minutes when he's preaching and saying, bring me that lame boy over here, I'm going to heal him. All right, let me get on with my message.

Four minutes later, give me that blind woman over here, I'm just going to heal her anytime I want. No, there's no verse that indicates that was the demonstration. So then what was it like to hear Paul preach? Maybe none of us have heard real New Testament preaching.

My preaching was not with wise and persuasive words. But with the demonstration of the power of the Holy Spirit. Here's what my wife's always wanted.

When the song is over, not for the people to say, what a choir, what a director. She's always wanted them to say, what a God, what an awesome God, what a Savior. Everybody just lift up your hands gently.

Father, we just thank you that we're here together. We want to do your work better for you. We're going to sing this song, come Holy Spirit, all how I need thee.

And that's our prayer today, Lord, that for every member that's here of the conference, every. Attendee that you would come and do something new in their life today, lift burdens, encourage troubled hearts, Lord, let them go back so full of faith and fresh faith, fresh fire. Indeed, Lord, fresh wind indeed, Lord, just make our choirs better, our churches better and let us be instruments for your glory for we prayed in Jesus name.

We praise you, Lord. We surrender our ways. Our thoughts to your thoughts, your ways.

Humble us. Take pride and self-seeking away. Make us sensitive to the leading of your spirit and help us.

To come to the place where what we say and sing and do for you is anointed by the Holy Spirit in a greater way than ever before, not for our church sake, not for our denomination sake, but for the sake of Jesus Christ and his kingdom, make us kingdom minded people. We pray this in his name and everyone said.

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