

# A Coward Has No Power

by Shane Idleman

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of being filled with the Holy Spirit to have the power to transform our lives and lead our churches.*

**Duration:** 46:17

**Scripture:** 2 Chronicles 7:14, 2 Chronicles 16:9, Psalm 32:6, Matthew 10:28, Romans 8:26, 1 Corinthians 16:13, Ephesians 6:12, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, Hebrews 4:16, James 5:16

**Topics:** "Holy Spirit", "Bold Prayer"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the contrast between being a coward without power and being filled with the Holy Spirit, highlighting the need for boldness, intercession, and agonizing prayer for the nation and the church. It calls for believers to step out in faith, identify with the sins of the nation, and pray with authority and agony, drawing inspiration from biblical figures who stood boldly for God despite challenges.

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## Transcript

The message this morning is a coward has no power. And I've been chomping at the bits on this one. A coward has no power.

And a confession, I am a coward. Minus the work of the Holy Spirit. If you remove the transforming work of the Holy Spirit in my life, I would never come to this pulpit.

I would never speak to you the way I'm going to speak to you this morning or the way I've been speaking to you. I wouldn't stand for Christ. Actually, looking back in my 20s, I think I was a believer, a prodigal.

I don't know if I ever mentioned Jesus for years. I was a coward. And if you remove that boldness of the Holy Spirit, you will be a coward.

And just a confession that I am a coward without that. I am afraid of persecution without the Holy Spirit. I'm afraid of what is happening in our nation without the Holy Spirit.

I'm afraid to raise kids in this type of environment and where we live in our culture without the Holy Spirit. I'm afraid to lead this church and to preach without the Holy Spirit. I am a coward.

And there's so much going on at Tuesday, which you all know. I'm preaching to the choir. But often when we see the direction of our nation, when we have candidates that say, yeah, you can basically kill a child

as long as it's not born yet.

It's like, am I alive, Lord? Am I in a nightmare? Help me, God. But see, sorrow often produces action. That's one benefit of sorrow is that it produces action.

You'll do things that you wouldn't normally do. When I'm sorrow, like Nehemiah, why should I not be sad when the place of my father's tombs lies in waste? We have become one nation above God versus one nation under God. And because of that sorrow, many of you feel it.

You can feel it. And that sorrow should actually drive us to action. That's the point of it.

Not to go, oh my goodness, we're going to hell in a handbasket. Let's just walk around miserable. No.

But that sorrow produces. And actually sorrow is a result of ministry. Many people start ministries because of sorrow.

And I'm all for encouragement. It's not doom and gloom. But we have to use this sorrow and lead it to action.

Lead it to prayer. Lead it to fasting. Lead it to seeking God versus Facebooking everything, and the world's coming to an end.

It's this godly sorrow that produces results. Just this week, I hadn't thought about this quote for years. And I was driving Benjamin Franklin, who it's some doubt he was even a believer.

He listened to George Whitefield. And I don't know how you cannot become a believer after listening to George Whitefield in the first great awakening of America. But Benjamin Franklin said he stopped a prayer meeting in Congress.

They used to have that. Did you know that? Forming the Constitution, they quoted the Bible four times more than any other source. They said, hold on, this is not going anywhere.

If a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without his aid? He's saying if God notices the sparrow that falls, is it probable that we're going to create an empire without his aid? And Abraham Lincoln, I believe, four fasting proclamations for the nation to go into prayer and fasting. See, that was commonplace. Now we think, oh, we're Christians.

No, we're just trying to go back to the foundations. If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do? Choose the old path, the old way that is right and that is good. And we will have a new president this time next week.

And we need power like never before. I don't know what the results will be. But I know that we need to be filled with the Spirit of God again.

So a coward has no power. What I'm talking about is a coward has no spiritual power. Because a coward does have power to transform his family for the worse.

And I see many men, they're getting their kids and their wives so afraid about what's going on in their nation. They're sleeping with guns under their bed. And they're stocking up on food and water.

And they're so worried about what's happening. And they're leading their family, I believe. Now, those things are fine.

You have a gun, you have extra food, good. Nothing wrong with that. But where is the focus? Where is our heart? And a coward can lead people astray in the wrong direction.

So a coward has no spiritual power. The church is looking. The church throughout America is looking for better methods.

But God is looking for better men and women. He's just looking for men and women filled with the Spirit of God. The eyes of the Lord go to and fro throughout the whole earth to show himself strong on behalf of those whose hearts are loyal to him.

He's looking. So with that as our foundation, a coward has no power. We're going to turn to Acts 4. We've been in the book of Acts.

Acts 4. I'm reading from the New King James Version. Now, as they spoke to the people. Now remember, Peter and the disciples were filled with the Spirit of God.

And once they're filled with the Spirit of God, now they're in trouble. Now they're causing damage. Now they have authority.

Now they have power. Jesus said, Don't go out and do anything. Don't even start a ministry until you receive power.

So now they're filled with the Holy Spirit. Now they're filled with power, God's power. And if you're not a believer or you're not understanding what this is, the Holy Spirit isn't some ghost, some mystical little force that floats out there.

God, when we become a believer, the Holy Spirit, God's Spirit, actually dwells within the believer. Now you want to do good, but you don't know why you do bad. Now you love the things of God, but you're torn over the things of the world.

You have this power of the Holy Spirit residing in you as a believer. And many churches, I like what A.W. Tozer said, and I hope I don't misrepresent or misquote. I didn't write it down.

But if we were half as eager to prove that we can be filled with the Spirit, to prove that we can't, the church would be crowded. Because we are so eager. No, no, no, not the Holy Spirit.

Don't mention anything about the Holy Spirit. Don't talk about the Holy Spirit. That's weird.

Don't go in there. Don't even talk about Him. If we were just half as eager to be filled with the Spirit as we are to prove we can't be, the churches would be crowding.

So what you're seeing in the book of Acts, plain and simple, I could sum it all up, men and women on fire with God. They asked John Wesley, how in the world are you getting so many people to come to the church in these revivals? He said, basically, you set yourself on fire and people will come to watch you burn. And that's this overwhelming presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

So if you don't have that, how do I know? You know. You know. Either you're dead and dying spiritually, or you're full of spiritual life.

You fall into one of those camps. And if you are dying with the things of God, you're not filled with that passion and that presence of the Holy Spirit. This morning you can change that.

Because as you empty yourself, you're filled with the Spirit. That's how it works. The more we empty ourselves, the more we're filled with the Spirit of God.

So Acts 4, Now as they spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, being greatly disturbed that they taught the people, and they preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. So to preach Jesus the resurrection from the dead, they had to talk about sin. They had to talk about a Savior.

They had to talk about all these difficult things. And they laid hands on them, and they put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. However, many of those who heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to be about 5,000.

That's church growth. How do you grow your church? You're filled with the Spirit of God. And you pray, and you fast.

No, really Shane, how do you? God grows the church. God grows the church. So the Sadducees were upset because they preached in Jesus' name the resurrection from the dead.

The Sadducees were a religious sect who did not believe in the resurrection. So they're actually religious leaders who don't believe in any resurrection, not Jesus, let alone Jesus, but no resurrection from the dead at all. They didn't believe that someday we would be resurrected.

So they were very upset. And it's interesting. When the people heard the word, they were added to the church.

They were converted. So the unadulterated, untarnished word of God converted the people. Repent and believe was the main message that they were preaching.

Repent and believe. And I don't think things need to change. I don't think things need to change at all.

Repent and believe was the main message that grew the church, and it can be the main message today. So this begs the question, based on what we just read, does the world love the way that we do church? This is mainly for pastors. Listen to this.

Or people going to other churches too. Does the world love the way we do church? Do they appreciate that we never challenge or we never call things into question? Do they like the fact that we never make people feel uncomfortable or offended? If so, you may want to reconsider Jesus' words that true disciples will be hated by the world. There's no way around that.

We want to get around that, but there's no way around that. And you'll read in the article that you have in your bulletin today that I wrote an article, the Christian Post, and a lot of different news organizations are picking up and people are not happy about it. But a best-selling Christian author came out in support of gay marriage and how we should come alongside and help them raise their kids and be supportive of this.

One of the main reasons is wanting her view, she wanted to be liked by the world and wanted the world to appreciate and understand. But churches should be welcoming, loving, accepting, friendly, warm, hospitable places of worship. See, that's the challenge.

The world's going to hate me, but I have to be welcoming, I have to be loving and accepting and friendly and warm and hospitable. Because I accept I'm welcoming. We should be accepting people to come as they are.

But you're going to hear the unadulterated, unpolluted Word of God that convicts and changes the heart. And then if you choose to stay, wonderful. If not, that's okay.

We can't wonder if we're pleasing. Did I please? Did I please? What did Jesus say when He said, How can they hate me first? Because everybody thinks sinners just love Jesus. Not all of them.

No, not all of them. Entire cities didn't repent. Would you get out of here, Jesus? He healed a demonic man, cast out a legion full of demons, and the whole city came and said, Please leave.

Please leave. Get out of here. So those who love Him love repentance.

They love to be in right relationship with God. They love the message. And those that rejected His message did not.

They hated Him. They hated. Just look at the news.

Just look at the world will hate us when we follow Christ. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance, Jesus said. So the first point, a coward.

A coward has no power. A coward avoids the difficult truths of the Bible, but someone filled with the Spirit of God must declare them. So you see that the first disciples, they were not cowards anymore.

They declared the difficult truths that people didn't want to hear so they could help set them free. And then we move into verse 5. And it came to pass on the next day that the rulers, elders, and scribes, as well as Annas the high priest, sorry, Annas the high priest. I'll skip his name so I can remember how to pronounce it.

I just had it this morning. John, Alexander, and many as were of the family of the high priest. Caiaphas, there we go, were gathered together in Jerusalem.

And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power or by what name have you done this? Both Caiaphas and Annas were high priests. I believe Annas came first and then Caiaphas followed, but he still had a position of authority in the church. So they were both high priests.

And all the rulers said, By what power or by what name have you done this? And this is a little interesting because they knew the answer. They've been telling ever since Peter's first sermon, but way back when we read weeks ago, he said, You put Christ on the cross. You must repent in Jesus' name.

You must be baptized. So they knew what this was all about, but they asked him, How are you doing this? This man is clearly healed that we read about last week. We knew he's healed, but how and why could you do this? They were hoping for a different answer is what happened.

They kept saying, Jesus' resurrection, Jesus' resurrection, Jesus' resurrection. God is moving. God is disrupting the entire religious system that they built.

So they're saying, What and how are you doing this? They wanted a different answer. And doesn't that remind you of today? When God moves, people often look for another answer. When God moves, when God truly brings revival or when God truly builds a church that's on fire for Him and for His presence, you don't think there'll be opposition? Oh, come on.

They're just telling people what they want to hear. They're to this. They're to that.

They deny a true work of God, and you better be careful in this area because spiritual people are offended that God is moving without them. Spiritual people. When God is moving, but why not me? Why aren't I as spiritual? And they begin to put down everything about God.

This goes back to what I talked about earlier. If you want to go back, you can listen to the message, but when we talk about the power of the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, very controversial topic, but I've noticed that those who are upset about the gifts of the Holy Spirit have not experienced them. Plain and simple.

They're spiritual. Some of them are godly men and women, but because they haven't experienced, they say, no, God isn't moving today like that anymore. That can't be of God.

That can't be of God. It can't be because it doesn't make sense. We're offended that God is not moving with, well, why haven't I experienced that? Probably because you have a spirit of doubt and you're not open to what God wants to do.

Anytime we, no, no, Jesus left there because of their unbelief. And if I were you, I'd say, God, I want everything you have for me. I'm not gonna be weird.

I'm not gonna be fanatical. I'm gonna be filled with your spirit. Lord, what does that mean? I want you to show me.

Shane's irritated the heck out of me these last few weeks, but I want what you want. And it's interesting, on this topic of the Holy Spirit, it offends people. They don't like to talk about the Holy Spirit.

It's like the Father, the Son, and the Holy Word. I'll talk about that, right? The Father, the Son, and the Holy Word. Why is that? Because it's the Holy Spirit that grips our heart.

It's the Holy Spirit that brings me to my knees. It's the Holy Spirit that convicts and draws. It's the Holy Spirit that might make you do this.

It's the Holy Spirit that might make you shout for joy. It's the Holy Spirit that might make you change every single radio station in your vehicle to things that glorify Christ. It's the Holy Spirit that's gonna redirect your Facebook posts.

It's the Holy Spirit that moves in all areas of the church. Where are these people coming from? The Holy Spirit moving and guiding and directing and pulling and releasing. That's why.

Have you ever thought the enemy might not like the Holy Spirit as much as he doesn't like God the Father and the Son? Because the Holy Spirit is God's agent to redirect an entire nation or a church or a group of

people. Without the power of the Holy Spirit, you just have a dead, formal, legalistic church. And that's why this topic is so upsetting.

Thank God I got claps versus everybody being quiet or I think we'd be in trouble. And the hard part for me is, like I said before, seeing people die spiritually. You're dying spiritually.

But I talk to pastors, there's just no life in their church. They're young girls and they're just shamed. You need the power of the Holy Spirit.

Oh, I don't want that weird stuff. Weird stuff? Is Acts weird? See, if Acts is weird to you, there's a problem there. If the book of Acts, I read it and go, praise God.

Oh my Lord, if we would just have that spiritual power and that anointing from the Holy Spirit. Because the book of Acts, it actually doesn't end at Acts 28, 29, 30. It's an ongoing book of the Christian church.

There's no reason, there's no reason any church cannot experience a lot of what they experience in the book of Acts. There's just no reason for it. Now, we don't see healing to the same degree.

We don't see signs. Well, I agree. I don't have a good example.

I mean, I don't have a good reason for it other than I wonder often if we're not hungry for it enough. I mean, God, you're going to heal me or am I going to go to Kaiser? Man, my tooth really hurts. Do we have any Vicodin left? I mean, God, He's always the last.

And I don't mean to poke fun, but He's often the last resort instead of the first. See, on the mission field, the eagers will probably tell you, in Africa, talking to Sylvester, you don't have healthcare. You don't have, you don't have, I've seen pictures of, they've made flip-flops out of water bottles and leather straps.

You can't just go take this or do that. They've got God or they don't have anything. It's either God or nothing.

And so when you see God, God, you're everything I need, of course you're going to see more things happen. What's happening? Of course! A coward makes excuses. A coward makes excuses, but someone filled with the Spirit does not.

They cannot. Verse 8 then, Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit. My goodness, I cannot get away from this topic.

Why would the Bible say that? It doesn't say, and Peter, breathing. Of course he's breathing. Peter, eating.

Of course he's eating. Peter, alive. Of course he's alive.

But Peter was filled again with the Holy Spirit. That's why there are subsequent feelings, fillings of the Holy Spirit. I curse that word sometimes.

People can be so depleted that they need a fresh filling. They need to be filled again with the Holy Spirit. Or, maybe not in Peter's case, but he spoke mightily.

He was filled with the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Maybe days had went by. He's ministering.

He's talking to people. He's doing these things. Not in sin.

Nothing. And here comes this call of God again to address these religious leaders. You're going to jail.

You're going to jail. You're going to be locked up. You better be nice.

You better be this. And then Peter being filled with the Holy Spirit. So this endowment, this epi that we talked about, the preposition of the Holy Spirit that comes upon someone.

And the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus. The Holy Spirit came upon Peter. The Holy Spirit came upon Paul.

And I pray often, God, if you don't come upon me this morning, I do not want to walk to that pulpit. Because if you don't come upon me and I'm just going to try to get through this, it's not going to work. And Shane, filled with the Holy Spirit, spoke.

And you, filled with the Holy Spirit at home. And it's this ongoing filling of the Holy Spirit. Here's why this is so important.

D.O. Moody said, we are leaky vessels. So I leave here feeling great, and about four hours, it's like, what happened? It's like the world is a cesspool. It's just, it's just, it's just, and something happens.

I get bitter. I get upset. This happens.

I get negative. Oh, this happens. Something breaks.

And now here comes Tuesday. I'm just a mess. I don't want to preach again.

I can't prepare my sermon. I don't know what happened. Drained.

I was drained. So finally, brethren, Paul says, whatever things are pure and noble, renew your mind. Do not be conformed to this image, but be renewed by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Renew your mind. And it gets back into the word, back in prayer, back into worship, and that's what fills us with the Spirit. So Peter, being filled with the Spirit, said to them, rulers of the people and elders of Israel, if we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means has he been made well? Let it be known to you all and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, that's filled with the Spirit.

Because what those today, you see on TV, you're going to see them on TV later today, or we cowardly pulpits, they say, you know what? We're so sorry. We didn't mean to offend. Did we offend you? How can we come along and just have a conversation and try to better understand where we're coming from? And if I could just understand your dialogue and your tribe and your camp, and you can just understand mine, and then we kind of, please don't get, I'm not in trouble, please.

I'm not trying to start anything. That's what cowardness does. You see the difference? Peter said, these guys can kill him.

These guys can put him in jail for a lifetime. He said, you crucified, whom God raised from the dead. See, you can be filled with the Spirit of God, and you fear God more than man.

How can William Tyndale and John Huss be burned at the stake by simply declaring the truth of God? Martin Luther, when he was faced with possible execution, they said, recant all of your works. He said, here I stand. I can do no other.

That's filled with the Holy Spirit of God. What is driving ISIS crazy right now? These people will not recant. True believers.

Kids are ready to go see their Savior. Parents are ready to see their Savior. Filled with the Holy Spirit.

Church, that's what we need. We don't need more methods. We don't need more programs.

Lord knows we don't need more studies. We need men and women filled with the Spirit of God. That's how you change.

The nation's not changed on Tuesday. It's changed on Sunday. That's how you change the nation.

You change the church. You change the church. Filled with the Spirit of God.

Just think if all of us... I'm being unrealistic. But just think if... Oh, goodness. Let's just think if all of us could leave here filled with the Spirit of God.

You go into each restaurant. You see your waitress has a certain look, probably in desperation. Yesterday, the guy I went to, he's sitting on the edge of the aqueduct.

He says, is everything okay? I said, yeah, just contemplating and meditating. I said, praying too? He goes, no, I need to do that. I talked about my wife and marriage issues, and talked about church, and opened door, and opened door, and opened door.

I was sitting at the post office and invited a girl two months ago to church. I don't know if she's here this morning, so I'm not going to say too much about it. But she was giving her testimony about how Jesus saved her out of a certain lifestyle in front of other people in the post office.

See, people filled with the Spirit of God. And then the lady next to me goes, oh, I'm looking for a church. I've just been delivered off PCP, and I moved here a year and a half.

I've been set free. My kids are looking for a church here. And it's just God's move.

It's everywhere. You can't get away from it when you're filled with the Spirit. It's not, Shane, do you just walk around Kumbaya, walking on clouds? No, of course not.

But there's opportunity everywhere we go. If I had more time, I saw a guy pulled over right before 60th West, pulled over just sitting there like this. His wife probably had the door open, looked like she was throwing up.

Huh, Saturday night. Hmm, wonder what that could be from. Alcohol? Hungover? Right, if I had more time, I'd pull over and sit.

Who knows? Because when you're Spirit-led, you're Spirit-directed. And God, there's divine appointments. God opens those doors.

And that's what we need. We need believers filled with the Holy Spirit of God. So Peter said, Whom you crucified, God has raised from the dead.

And by Him, this man stands here before you whole. This is the stone which was rejected by you builders. Now you might go, oh, that's interesting.

No, that was offensive. Because Jesus already told them that I am the cornerstone and you are rejecting Me. And they wanted to kill Him.

Because they knew exactly what He was talking about. Nor is there salvation in any other name. There is not salvation in any other name.

For there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. This is interesting too. People will go on television.

They'll go on talk shows and they'll, whether it's Oprah or Larry King or dozens of other people, and they'll tiptoe. Is Jesus the only one? Well, for me, for me, that's what I believe. You know, for me.

I don't know for you. What about this group? What about that group? Well, I don't know. Are they sincere? I mean, God's got a lot of different, you know, tribes out there.

What is that? Coward. A coward has no power. A coward has no spiritual power.

This is so clear. Nor is there salvation in any other. For there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

And this is an interesting point. Because anytime, this is where people get offended. I'll talk to people at the church down the street.

No, it's not Brigham Young. It's not Joseph Smith. It's Jesus Christ.

Roman Catholic Church, Mormon Church, Jehovah Witness, you don't have to be part of their group to be saved. You have to look at the only name that says Jesus Christ. That's the only name.

And here we go. It's not Allah. It's not Buddha.

It's not Hare Krishna. It is Jesus Christ. And there's power in that name.

That's why people don't want to proclaim that name often is because they don't know that name. Because if that name is near and dear to you, that you will proclaim that name. There is salvation in no other name.

And it's okay to say that because what happens when you say that? You just planted the seed. Now God will deal with them. You don't have to chase them around.

See what I tell you. See what I tell you. Try to win them in arguments.

Try to Facebook them and email them. Hey, this is for you. No, just plant the seed.

Just plant the seed and let God do the work. Without the Spirit, Peter would have been apologetic. Correct? Without the Spirit, he would have been apologetic.

A coward apologizes. That's number three about a coward. A coward apologizes.

Someone filled with the Spirit reinforces God's Word. Now, I'm not discouraging apologizing. It's good to do.

If you've done something wrong, you apologize. But when we've gotten this... I know the Old Testament's hard. I know this.

And it's like we're just apologizing often for God's Word. But someone filled with the Spirit reinforces what God's Word says. Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit.

Before I get off this point, I want to remind you that God strengthens you by indwelling you. The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. That's where the power comes from.

So God will strengthen you to the degree you are filled. Little filling, little strength. Fully filled, full of strength.

A good analogy. Actually, I love men's conferences. I spoke at Hulme Lake because I can wear flannel and tennis shoes.

It's a men's conference. You don't have to worry about a lot of things. And right before my message, I was in heaven.

God, this is wonderful. I couldn't have planned this better. They're giving away a brand new 12-gauge shotgun, full choke.

I don't know if it has three-inch magnum capacity. I didn't know. I was holding it.

Can I be in that drawing, too? I couldn't because I was leaving, but it's this nice 12-gauge shotgun. So what he did, though, he left it right here. So I'm up here preaching.

I'm like, can I grab this? So I don't have anything that's going to work. Because I actually asked a few sheriffs if I could use this analogy. He said, probably not a good idea.

It works up there, but probably not going to work here. So imagine this 12-gauge shotgun. Imagine if I had, let's say I had a 12-gauge shotgun.

Oh, that's nice, Shane. Isn't that interesting? You know, that's cool. I'm not sure how I feel about guns.

But what about if I grabbed the three-inch magnum, shell buckshot, let's say, put it in there, close the magazine, and now it's loaded? What would you, would there be exit doors? Quietly, you'd be exiting? Sheriffs would even be going, I'm not sure where this is going. Did I bring mine today? But folks, what's the difference? What's the difference? The gun, without that ammunition, is empty. That's why I often say, you can be straight as a gun barrel, theologically, but just as empty.

See, many people have the word. They go to church, but they're just as empty. The shotgun can't do anything.

But when I put that three-inch magnum load in there, now it has authority. Now it's going to cause damage. Now people are going to run for cover.

Now you've got the respect. Now people will listen. That's the difference.

That's what the Holy Spirit comes in. He comes in, and He fills your life with this power, with this unction of the Spirit, of God's presence. That's the power of the Holy Spirit.

This thing that everybody's afraid about. See, the very thing you're worried about is the very thing you need. The filling and power of the Spirit.

The name of Jesus was forbidden. Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. Why did they marvel? They've never went to our schools.

They never went to our seminaries. They don't have a PhD in theology or a master's degree in church history. Has he ever studied Greek? Has he ever studied Hebrew? Does he know anything about pneumatology and eschatology and theology? Was his sermon prepared correctly? It's hominetics and hermeneutics and all these wonderful things.

How is this possible if they don't know any of that? Because when you know Christ, that's where you speak from. You speak from a position of authority experiencing theology. And that's why I often say a degree from the master is far more valuable than a master's degree.

A degree from the master is far more... Now, big disclaimer in there so people don't get the wrong impression. Please, study. Get an education.

I study all the time. I look to what Calvin said about this passage this morning. And Norman Geisler.

And theology. And Martin Luther. And you look to... You bring in that, but when they see... He didn't go to seminary.

He didn't go to seminary. He went to the school of hard knocks where God broke him and drove him to the cross and drove him to his feet. Now out of that experience, now he preaches the gospel.

And we can tell he didn't come from Pepperdine. He sure didn't come from the master's seminary. He didn't come from Talbot's theological seminary.

He came from the prayer closet where the Spirit of God spoke through him and drove people to the cross and repented. My goodness. A coward is timid.

Someone filled with the Spirit is bold. That's the defining difference. This is the defining difference.

Someone filled with the Spirit of God is bold about their faith. Someone who's not is very timid. They're not going to talk much about it.

They're not going to talk about their faith. Actually, the sad fact is they're embarrassed about their faith. Do you know that's why teenagers and young adults don't talk about Jesus? The majority.

The majority of them do not talk about Jesus because they don't want their friends to think weird of them. They'll post Katy Perry and Beyonce at the Country Music Awards. What's he talking about? Well, that's good then.

They're all about that, but when it comes to Jesus, I'm a coward. Right, because you're not filled with the Spirit of God. You cannot be filled with the Spirit of God and be a coward.

It's impossible because it's the Holy Spirit working through you. Now, be gentle. Be understanding.

Be compassionate. With that boldness comes the fruit of the Spirit. See, with boldness comes love and joy and peace and contentment, long-suffering, gentleness and kindness and self-control.

You get all that? So, with boldness comes love and joy and peace and contentment, understanding, gentleness, kindness, self-control. All those things come with that boldness. That was verse 14.

We're going to pick up a little bit next week, but I just want to hang my hat here for a minute. Let's just look at everything we've just read over the last few weeks. Everything we've read.

A coward runs and remains silent. A coward will remain silent. And we are seeing a lot of people, Christians in our nation, concerned, but they are not doing much other than posting things on Facebook.

When was the last time you fasted for our nation or the church? When was the last time you came to the altar? You see, it's funny. We forget that the altar is a sacred place where people come forward and people say, oh, altar calls, Charles Finney started. No, he didn't.

They were actually way before Charles Finney. The Methodist circuit writers used to call them mourner's benches. And people who were concerned about the condition of their heart would go forward and sit in a mourner's bench so they could be counseled later and directed to the Lord.

It's a place of coming forward, acknowledging our reliance on God. So we've learned, cowards run and remain silent, but someone filled with the Spirit of God must do something. Sitting in the pew, listening does not move the hand of God.

And that's where I really want to get this point across often, which you know, if you've been coming, you know I do. Sitting here, listening, going to Jack's place afterwards is not what we're looking for. That doesn't do much.

That's just therapy. Ah, Shane said some things. Hmm, that sounds good.

I've got to work on things. Now what's for lunch? That's not... Anytime you'd see God's words preached, you'd see action. God's words preached, you'd see action.

God's words preached, you'd see action. It's not a contemplating. It's an active faith.

And actually, faith does that. Faith steps out into what I can't see. Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

And I step out into that faith. Lord, I'm stepping out. I don't know what you're going to do.

I don't know. Do you realize once God put it on a lot of the people here to move the church out here, and I would have to fight just thoughts of, there's only about 50 or 60 people here. You know, God's just, oh, is he going to leave us if we move out there? The enemy's coming in.

The enemy's coming in. But faith says, Lord, all the doors are pointing. You're in this.

If you're in this, just sit back. You better just sit down, buckle up, and hold on. Because if God's in it, he's moving.

And all you do is you step out in faith and allow him to do the work. You step out in faith and allow him to do the work. You come forward, or you go to the prayer area, or you step out and say, Lord, I'm going to make a difference.

Here's why this is so big. This is such a big deal right now. We need intercessors more than any time in the history, I believe, of our nation.

We need people interceding. And I know many people are going, yeah, what is that? What is he talking about? Interceding is very important. Daniel 9, 5. Daniel came.

Daniel, a godly man. He said, we have sinned, and we have done wrong. We have been wicked, and we have rebelled.

We have turned away from your commands and your laws. Daniel didn't. Daniel didn't do that.

But he's interceding. He's saying, we have sinned and done wrong. We have been wicked.

We have rebelled. We have turned away from your commands and your laws. That's why Nehemiah said, why should I not be sad when the place of my father's tombs lies in waste? Why should we not be sad? Millions have given their lives that we would be one nation under God, not above God.

People have given their lives for this wonderful thing we call freedom, not to abort 3,000 children a day. Did you catch that number? I had to research a couple times this week. You've got to be kidding me.

Shane, why do you always bring this up? Because it's a tragedy. It's a tragedy, sorry. Dyslexia is kicking in.

It's a horrific thing. Sex trafficking, horrific thing. Why are Christians so dull to these things? It's because they're not filled with the Spirit of God.

Oh, the excitement when the Cubs won. So see, you can get excited. You can get emotional.

And if that wasn't your team, you can get just as upset. We need people interceding. Isaiah 62, On your walls, oh Jerusalem, I have appointed watchmen.

All day and all night they will never keep silent. Jeremiah 29.7, Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile and pray to the Lord on its behalf for in its welfare you will have welfare. You see, guys, I don't care how old you are.

Our children need us. Our grandchildren need us. There's a time and a place where we look at what's going on and we say, they need us.

Can you imagine your little child having children and what that's going to lead to? That should cause all of us to get on our face before God. What does an intercessor do? Here's what I want to clarify and get to the main point. When you intercede, you are identifying with the group of people.

There is identification, there's authority, and there's agony. Identifying. We're identifying.

Christ identified with us. Was he an intercessor? I hope he interceded on your behalf. That's what an intercessor does.

And when you go to pray, we think, oh, that's just going to fall on deaf ears. No, it's not. God actually calls us to be intercessors.

He's told Ezekiel, I sought for a man from among them who would build a wall and stand in the gap before me so I might not destroy the land, and I found no one. So God is calling people to intercede and to identify. Look, Lord, we have sinned.

We have shed innocent blood. We have glorified pornography. We have stomped on the definition of marriage.

God, the sex trafficking, the sex slave, Lord, there's blood on our hands as a nation. We repent. We are interceding.

I identify with that. And then God gives us the authority through His Word to pull down strongholds and everything that exalts itself against the knowledge of Christ. And then from that, He gives me an agony, and He gives you an agony.

You can't pray well unless you agonize. See, if the church had more agonizers and less organizers, we'd be doing much better. But that's what God... God takes a person and He breaks them.

He breaks them so they have to agonize. And I don't know if you saw on the news that little 10-year-old girl that was stolen from a prayer meeting on Tuesday. They just found her body.

Why doesn't the church agonize? See, feel the pain. Feel the pain. See what ISIS is doing.

See what we're doing when a little child is born 10 weeks, 9 weeks, 12 weeks, 14, 16, 20, and they're getting this new life, and then the doctor has the audacity to go in and remove that child, throw it in the trash can. Oh, the agony, folks. You've got to agonize.

You've got to feel the pain that we are causing because that agony will drive you to the floor. It will drive you to your knees. You might get a little weepy.

You might cry a little bit. It might change the way you live. But if you don't agonize, you will not pray.

Who's going to stand in the gap? Who? And depending on Wednesday, you might want to start agonizing now. Tuesday won't save America, but Sunday will. If my people, if my people.

Think, where are these Peters? Where are they today? Where are the Peters and the Pauls who spoke with such authority that not even martyrdom silenced them? They're dead, and they still speak. Where are these people? Where are the Jeremiah's and Isaiah's calling the nation back to repentance? Where are the William Tyndale's and the John Huss's who were burned at the stake? Where are the John Knox's who said give me Scotland for the cause of Christ, or I shall die. When was the last time you said give me America? Forget that.

Give me California. Give me this Antelope Valley for the cause of Christ, or I shall die. And then from that agony, God starts to work in your heart, and you start to put prayer as your focus.

You start to fast. You start to agonize for what God wants you to do, and that's how He directs. We've got too many pompous, arrogant people who want to be organizers, but not agonizers, and that's a true statement.

God moves through agony. Where are the John Wesley's who said give me just a hundred men as long as they fear sin and desire God, and we'll storm the gates of hell. Where are they today? Where are the

George Whitfield's and the D.L. Moody's who brought America to her knees? Where are the Richard Baxter's, the Puritans who said I preach as a dying man to dying men.

That's how I preach. Do you realize that? Everyone in this room, we are breathing our last breath. We are dwindling down, not raising up.

I preach as a dying man. I am dying physically, but not spiritually, and I preach a risen Savior. Some might not return next week.

I understand that. I won't talk to the same group ever again. I preach as a dying man to dying men.

So where is the burden? Where is that burden for the lost? I mention sex trafficking and all that because it is so real. I just met a girl who was trafficked in East Palmdale 10 years ago. Where's the burden, the agony, and the authority? By the authority of God's Word, we can get on our knees and faces before God.

By the authority of the Word of God, He says, you call down strongholds. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but they're mighty through God. You pull down strongholds.

You make a difference. You go to the altar. You weep.

You pray. You fast. You sacrifice, and then I will move on your behalf.

The eyes of the Lord. See, this is interesting. Don't ever forget this.

The enemy goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. Did you know that? Are you well aware that there is an enemy? He goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. But the eyes of the Lord go to and fro throughout the whole earth to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose hearts are loyal to Him.

So the question is, who finds you? One or the other will find you.

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