

Break Up Your Fallow Ground

by Shane Idleman

The sermon emphasizes the necessity of preparing our hearts to receive from God through humility, repentance, and prayer.

Duration: 39:37

Scripture: Ezra 10:7, Galatians 6:7

Topics: "Heart Preparation", "Spiritual Revival"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of preparing our hearts to receive from God, likening it to breaking up fallow ground for planting. It discusses the need to remove sin and distractions, seek God diligently, and be open to His mercy and grace. The speaker passionately urges the congregation to examine their hearts, seek God wholeheartedly, and be receptive to His transforming work.

Transcript

Break up your follow ground. The introduction, just like farmers have to prepare the ground to bear fruit, we must prepare our hearts to receive from God. You see the ground, right? That's followed ground.

The ground has been broken up. It's ready to now receive. And the Bible talks about, and I'm going to read some verses about preparing our hearts.

And the reason I wanted to, this actually, I wrote down the title of this message and the concept months ago, wanting, just feeling a desire to break up. Because sometimes as Christians, we forget we've got to prepare our heart to receive from God. We can't just sit here and not receive from God and go home with the same attitudes, the same dispositions that we came here with.

We have to prepare our hearts for God. And often, I'm just throwing a blanket statement out there, a lot of hearts are not prepared to receive from God. There's not a worshiping heart going on.

I often think of this, and I'll share it with you, I'll be transparent. If I came up here and said, you know what, Brant, just keep going on for the next hour, I'm not even going to preach. How many people say, oh, that's going to be boring.

I mean, if you're saying that's going to be boring, there might be a worship disconnect there. There might be a problem that God's wanting, how do I know? Because that was me. Back row, as soon as the last song, here's a quick message, and I'm out of here.

I did that for many years. That was my MO, modus operandus, right? That's how I operated. I got enough in of God, so I'm a good person, but I'm definitely not going to sit there and worship.

You might as well just scratch fingernails on a chalkboard. So just a heart check. You've got to look at our heart because we have to prepare the heart to receive from God.

You get the heart ready to receive. Imagine this for a minute, water, raining, pouring in on that ground. It's ready to receive.

Now parallel that with the parking lot. Concrete, rain falling on that. Where's that water going? It's not receiving.

Why? Because of the hard concrete versus the fall of ground. And God rains down, and God brings His Word, and He wants to invest and change our hearts. But if it's concrete, you're not going to receive it.

And I think we live in this mindset that I heard the Word. I'm at church, so I received. Not necessarily.

Not necessarily, because there's a lot of people. They'll hear something, and then they'll tune it out because the heart's not ready. I made a comment last night at Grace Fest, and I think a lot of people tuned me out right then, but I felt led to say it, talking about arrogance and not standing for the national anthem.

That's a height of arrogance that we're seeing. You're being paid. I'm a history of bringing up topics again, but I could tell the people just tuned me out.

And that's okay, because we need to hear some of these difficult things from time to time. Here's what the Bible Hub said about this expression of breaking up your fall of ground. Do not sow your seed among thorns.

Break off all evil habits. Clear your hearts of weeds in order that you may be prepared for the seed of righteousness. Land was allowed to lie fallow that it might become more fruitful.

But in this condition, it soon became overgrown with thorns and weeds. It became comfortable. If you leave that ground like that for a year, anyone even know what that's going to look like in a year from now? You're not even going to know that there's rose in there, or it's just going to be a mess, just a field of weeds, and things have grown up.

So you have to prepare that fallow ground is what the sermon is going to be based on. The cultivator of the soil was careful to break up his fallow ground to clear the field of weeds before sowing it. So says the prophet, break off your evil ways, repent of your sins, and cease to do evil.

No matter what we try to do, we can't get away from that concept, can we? It's everywhere. It's everywhere. I just when I was preparing, I'm like, this word repentance and turning from our sins and stop doing evil is everywhere throughout the Bible.

And then the good seed of the Word will have room to grow and bear fruit. Now at this point, you might be saying, Shane, I have broken off those evil ways. I have repented, I'm ceasing to evil.

I'm trying to follow hard after God. And that's good. I'm going to try to encourage you this morning.

But I would also want to throw out just a word of caution, that we can turn from many visible sins, but we can keep many sins of the heart unseen. Did you know I can hold jealousy in here, and bitterness, and resentment, and animosity, and judgmentalism, and you wouldn't even know. Now, technically, you would know because it will come out of my preaching, it will come out in the way I treat people.

But it's not a visible sin. It's a hidden sin of the heart. So that's really what the putting some of these scriptures in context, they're talking about the heart, getting the heart right, plowing up that hard and stony ground.

Here's the scripture references too. Actually, I found a third one for you. Jeremiah 4.3, break up your fallow ground.

Keep that in mind. Break up your fallow ground and do not sow among the thorns. In other words, that would be a lazy farmer, wouldn't it? If it just weeds everywhere.

I don't care. I'm going to plant my corn now. It'll make it in there somewhere.

But that's what we do. We want this fruitful harvest from God, but there's weeds growing everywhere. So he's calling the people back to God saying, prepare your heart.

Break up your fallow ground. Do not sow among the thorns. Circumcise yourself to the Lord.

That just means remove everything that's not of God, and focus on the Lord, and take away the foreskins of your heart. There's a circumcision of the heart that takes place. Hosea 10.12, sow for yourself righteousness.

Reap in mercy. Break up your fallow ground. So he's saying as you break up that fallow ground, you're sowing into it righteousness, and you're reaping God's mercy.

For it is time to seek the Lord till he comes and rains righteousness on you. Anytime you're going to seek the Lord, you're going to have to break up that fallow ground. A deeper seeking means a greater breaking.

If I'm going to seek, and you might say Shane, you must seek the Lord really good like Billy Graham. No, just like all of you. Just we're all in the same boat.

It's a different calling, but if I want to, here's why. If I wanted to seek God more fervently, I would starve my flesh. That's why I talk about fasting often.

I would starve that flesh. I would get on worship. I would disconnect Facebook for the next two weeks.

I would not care what's going on with ISIS and Iran and Trump and Hillary. I would just turn all of that off, and I would seek God, and I would remove these things. We can clap.

Just one more person can clap than that because that's the truth. See we can all seek God more fervently if we begin to remove these seeds and these weeds actually that are penetrating, that are preventing that. Now of course there's nothing wrong with knowing what's going on, but I have a feeling that we're a little bit more concerned with what's going on here than what's going on in the heart of God.

How do you know? You just listen to people talk. You just listen to what the Facebook and you people are inundated by what's going on, and I love this verse. I'd love to just do a sermon on this.

Joshua said to the people in Joshua 3.5, sanctify yourselves. See God sanctifies us. We're right before God when we put our trust in Christ.

Now I can stand before God because of Christ's righteousness. It's called imputed righteousness. His righteousness was given to me, but this type of sanctification, sanctify yourself for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you.

God will do wonders in the hearts of those people who sanctify themselves. This is a good one-liner. God moves on a prepared people and on a prepared heart.

God moves on a prepared people and a prepared heart, and I'll just share with you. You've already heard all this before, but for some reason God keeps bringing it up in my heart to share with you what I shared last night. If my people, and really Luke came up with a good title, if my people have five minutes, because we're at a crossroads.

You see, and a lot of those people last night, they know it, but nobody brings it to their attention. Everything's fine, right? Go back to sleep. So I said we're at a crossroads.

We are now a nation calling. We've crossed that line. We're calling good evil and evil good.

The prophet said woe be to that nation. Woe be to that group of people who call evil good and good evil. We've crossed that.

We're at a crossroads. There's something interesting going on, and we're looking. God, help.

You've got to do something. God, you have to move somehow, and any time, any time you'll see throughout church history, throughout biblical history, that any time God changes and revises and restores and breaks down and renews, it's out of boldness. It's coming from boldness.

What about the love of God? Yes, but it's the love of God that compels me to be bold. That's the whole point of boldness. The boldness of the Holy Spirit confronts sin, doesn't run away from it.

It confronts what's going on, doesn't turn its back. It's a loving confrontation. Jesus did it throughout the Bible.

Oh, you cities, you did not turn Bethesda. You did not turn when I preached to you. The five of the seven churches repent and turn to me, you whitewashed tombs.

It was consistent boldness calling the people back out of their wicked ways. Now, in this whole movement to be silent, to not talk about that drives me crazy because God gives us a hope. Does he not? He said, when I send pestilence, when I send famine, when I send all these things, Solomon, tell the people, if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and seek my face and pray and turn from their wicked ways.

If my people, I have, I've got to tell you up front, Hillary's not the answer. Trump's not the answer. It's not found in Washington or Hollywood.

It's not found in Lady Gaga or Katy Perry coming to repentance. It's if my people, God says, I just want you, you, you, you, you, you, probably you in the balcony. If my people humble themselves, you see, there's a humility that takes place, and there are a lot of pastors there last night, and Morgan said, you

might have stepped on some toes.

I said, that's okay. I don't care if you have 4,000 or 40. If you don't have humility, I don't want to hear from you.

Pride must die in you. Andrew Murray, Andrew Murray said, pride must die in you or nothing of heaven can live in you. See, that's a problem, and we don't even know it.

I'm a good spotter of prideful people. Why? Because I look in the mirror often, but we forget this pride has to die in you. I don't care if you've been a Christian all of your life.

If you're proud and arrogant, come to the foot of the cross and repent. If my people, that's the first step that we miss. We're prideful.

We're prideful. I've turned from my wicked ways. Well, wonderful for you.

You've missed the first step of humbly acknowledge. See, it's very hard to say I was wrong. That's why we come up with excuses.

Even husbands, wives fighting. Excuses, excuses, excuses, excuses, but it's very hard to say I was wrong. So God says, if my people, I'm assuming not everybody in here is perfect, that we come to God.

We say, God, I'm a prideful man. I'm a prideful woman. I need you.

That's the first step. And then if you pray, if you pray, this is not a quick little prayer. This isn't me coming up and just saying something.

This isn't driving home saying, God bless our day and bless this food. This is a whole life of prioritizing prayer. Prayer becomes the priority, not the afterthought.

When was the last time, let's be honest, but don't raise your hand, when was the last time you prayed for over 30 minutes and actually maybe shed some tears over the condition of our nation? You don't have to tell me because I know it's not many. And this is the most disheartening part about this topic of prayer for me, is I talk to parents all the time, prayed for some last night, for their prodigal son, and they don't know the Lord, and they won't even spend 30 minutes praying. They won't fast.

I've got to work. I've got to schedule. Folks, prayer moves the hand of God.

This is how you do warfare. You're not going to send them little Facebook tweets and little scriptures all the time to convince them. You need to grab down heaven and pull it down and say, God, save that child.

I'm removing everything until I pray, until I fast, until I seek you. If my people humble themselves and pray and seek my face, not my hand. How many of us are seeking his hand? Finances, retirement, Lord, open.

You know, I said, just seek my face. You parents, you know, how bad would you feel if you knew the only reason the kids loved you is because of what you're giving them? That would break my heart. I don't know about you.

And the seeking, you all know, but I explained it last night. It's like if they lost their child at Grace Fest, and who's going to say, oh, I'll find him at 10 o'clock when this is over, when things calm down. They would stop everything.

They would go, and that's what our life, that's a seeking God. We don't get this concept. When you truly seek God, nothing else matters.

Yes, I'll go to work. Yes, I'll do this. I've got responsibilities.

But if the primary purpose of my life is to seek God, see, here's the interesting thing. We're on the topic of Saturday service, Sunday service. If you want to seek God, you'll move everything around your schedule to fit church and to fit God.

I'm tired of God taking a back seat. Oh, no, no, no. Let me get started.

I'm just getting started. I'm tired of God. I didn't even shave today.

I'm not upset or passionate, I should say, right? But I'm so tired of hearing God get the back seat. If I can fit him in with soccer and baseball and this silly potluck and this birthday thing and this and this and this, then I might squeeze him in. And if the church could offer services every night so it's more convenient, so I can just fit him in and whatever.

See, the old saying used to say, God is my priority and everything else will fit in. Then when he's the priority, then you're seeking, not seeking God. If you want a user-friendly message, I can list about 10 churches and they're closer.

But it's time, I don't know, I came with a mission to get the church seeking God. And first, he's got to do this work in my heart before I can bring it to you. And then, of course, what's the last point? The one we just, actually, let me just act like I forgot it and move on.

Hmm, where was I? If my people humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked way. Wickedness is anything that we talked about before, anything that opposes God. So if there are things in our lives, I could read statistics on what pornography is in the church now, that it would alarm you.

Or maybe it wouldn't. Or all these other sins of the heart. Just turn, you got these idolatry and idols.

Anything you place before God is an idol. God says, you've got to remove these things from your life. If you humble, pray, seek, and turn from these things you know to be wrong, then I'll hear from heaven, and I will forgive your sins.

The Bible says, is not my hand short that I cannot save, or my ear heavy that I cannot hear, but your sins, your iniquities have separated you from me. Now, that might not apply to everybody. I realize that.

I realize there's some strong saints of God in here. But you've got a pride issue. You've conquered besetting sins, but you've got a pride issue.

You've got pride of the heart. And I can name many people. And I can name myself.

Those of us who have learned to conquer some things, forget that pride is the worst of all sins. We'll look down on the drug addict who can't give up heroin. But we don't confess and repent of our prideful, angry, judgmental hearts.

Think about it. How prideful have we been judging, even judging this church, judging ourselves about this, or about that, or about we're so prideful and arrogant. I don't know.

I'll call it, you know, what's old saying, it's better to ask for forgiveness than a permission. But I'm going to open up for just a minute here. There are times where I feel God moving at this service.

For example, now, I don't know what comes over me. 20 years ago, I would have been scared to death to even walk up here. And I feel the worship is powerful.

Yeah, maybe a little too loud. Maybe it's not the songs we all want. And I feel a powerful service.

Me and my wife are sometimes brought to tears. We love it. We can't get enough.

And then I start to hear this, the little complaining. And it breaks. It's like, were we not at the same service? What am I missing? God's moving powerfully.

Sure, we're sinners. We don't do everything perfectly. But there's so much complaining about the little things.

And no wonder we're not experiencing revival. You think God's going to bring revival on those types of hearts? So we're so excited. We're built up.

And then we hear all the little grumbling and complaining. It's like, my God, help us. And we need to hear what I'm saying right now.

So we stop it. That's the whole point of conviction and boldness is to say, stop this little stuff and start focusing on what God is doing. Who in their right mind would see this and complain about what God is doing unless their heart is hard? And confession.

I've been going through valleys of this often. We all do. That's why it says, humble yourself.

Humble yourself. And maybe that's, forget the whole rest of the message, but this, we have to look at our hard hearts. How can we experience a powerful worship service and leave here complaining and bickering? I can't believe they're stopping Saturday.

I can't believe it's that far. I can't believe they did this or this or that or that. It's like, folks, why even have church if our heart's not changing? Yeah, it's difficult to hear, but we need to hear it.

Because we won't change, will we, until we hear it? Listen, I've counseled enough marriage couples to know unless the spouse says, unless you change, I'm leaving. The person doesn't change often. They think everything's fine until they're confronted.

Same thing happens when we look at the Word of God, that it confronts us. So back to this topic of preparing the hearts. To make something ready for use, doctors are prepared, teachers are prepared, and parents try to be prepared.

I know there's a lot of kids in the service this morning, some kids, but keep this in mind. What you don't like in your parents and what you don't like them doing, they're actually preparing you for life. If they didn't care, they just let you do whatever, then they don't love you.

The reason they love you is because they're preparing you. They're getting you ready for life, and Christians need to prepare. Breaking, sowing, sanctifying.

This is interesting. I actually emailed a friend of mine who's a farmer in Washington on fallow ground. He said this, we rely on fallow ground for the land to rest and save moisture for an entire year.

It takes 14 inches of water to grow a crop, and fallow ground, this, allows us to save that. But then it must be tilled and prepared for the subsequent crop. It is usually hard and dry.

See, this is interesting. The land that was once useful and ready, after a year, it's now hard and it's dry, and I'm wondering how many of us have become hard and dry. Listen, the only reason I'm saying this is not to, well, maybe a little bit.

I want to say a little bit, but the point isn't to say, yeah, and beat you up. The point is to say, yeah, I've become hard and dry. God calls us from Genesis to Revelation to examine our heart.

Has your heart become hard and cold and callous? It's very healthy. Paul says, examine yourself. Do you not know yourself? Is Jesus Christ in you? Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God, and due time he will exalt you.

You exalt yourself and he will abase you. It's all over scripture. So let me ask that question.

Have you become hard and dry and callous? Repent of it this morning. And he said, then there's moisture about four inches down. The tillage breaks up the soil, the fallow ground, and allows for the seed to be planted again and brings up the moisture.

That's what I love about God. The seeds that were planted years ago, if you become hard and cold and callous, plow up that hard ground, and God can plant the new seed again, and you'll thrive. There's nothing better than a sinner repenting.

I'm sorry, a saint repenting. There's a good thing of a sinner repenting. But a saint of God, there's a wonderful thing that happens when we repent and get our lives back on track with God.

That hard is that hardness is softened up, and God begins to plant that seed again. If we want a deeper relationship with God, if we want to receive from God, if we want to grow, we must prepare the soil. If we learn anything from the Old Testament, if I've learned anything at all from reading the Old Testament over and over again, it's this.

Fallow ground that is not broken up leads to disappointment and delay by God. God delayed certain things because of that. I just, right now, I'm in that wonderful account.

You know, children of Israel, God says, here's the land. Here's the land. This is amazing.

I stopped. I put down my Bible. I said, this is unbelievable.

Now, I'm not too critical because that could have been me. I might have done the same thing. But God says, here's your land.

I brought you to it. It's been 10, 12 days, 15 days. I don't know exactly.

Here's your land. Go in and possess it. The spies come back.

We can't do that. A God that just parted the Red Sea, a God that's just been providing for them, they've seen all these miracles. God says, here's your land.

They said, no, we can't do it. We're not able to take this land. Caleb, Joshua, we are well able to take this land if God is with us.

And their hearts need to be broken up. But what happened? No, no, grumbling, complaining. So God says, okay, this whole generation is going to wander the next 40 years until you're all dead.

And then I'm bringing your children into the promised land. This is still applicable today, that certain things are delayed when the ground is not. If a ground's not ready, he's not going to plant.

The harvest is not going to come if the ground is not ready. The ground has to be positioned to receive. This is interesting too.

The ground does not the ground. The ground doesn't do anything on its own. It merely submits to the hand of the farmer.

The farmer will till it. The farmer will get it ready. The farmer will remove the wheat.

Same thing to us. We have to submit to the hand of the Father. Lord, I'm submitting to you, tear up this ground and position me.

So a few points and I'll be out of your way. I'm sure some of you are happy and some of you are not, but a couple points. I don't know why I said that.

I just did. You have to remember, I don't say everything perfectly for an hour. It's tough.

You try it. Okay, here's what we need to do. What are you sowing? Let's look at what we're sowing.

Like the farmer said, the moisture received during the fallow period is stored for future use. So the ground is like this and the rains and rains and they store 14 inches for a crop. So the concept what God is saying is, what are you sowing? What are you putting into that fallow ground? Galatians 6-7, do not be deceived.

God is not mocked. For whatever a man sows, he will reap. Here's the deceptiveness of sin.

Even little kids, you can hear this too. You can hear everything, but this more specifically, the deceitfulness and the deceptiveness of sin is that you will reap a very fruitful harvest. Here's what sin says.

You can plant terrible things, weeds, all these things. You can continue in your sin. Don't worry, you're going to reap a bountiful harvest.

See, you don't see anything yet. You're like, oh, look at that little green thing. That is going to be corn.

We're going to receive so much corn. See, this sin I'm doing, all the stuff I'm doing, doesn't matter. I'm still going to get a harvest.

And as that little green thing grows, you're like, oh my Lord, I have a field full of tare. I have a field full of weeds. What happened? Because what you sow, you also reap.

See, we don't commit a sin all the time, and then the consequences are right then. It's like touching a fire. It's like, we don't receive, it's like couple days, couple weeks go by, maybe a couple months.

I know pastors where God has given them years, years to repent of certain things. And but the deceitfulness, sin says, come on, it's not that bad. And then you realize that what you're now reaping is what you sowed months and months ago.

And many people go, oh my goodness, Shane, guess what? God can pull up all of that. He can till that soil. He can remove those weeds, and He can bring back the fruitful harvest if you, what's the whole message of the sermon? If you break up your fallow ground.

That's the wonderful thing that God will do that. But be careful because sin never shows you the end result. He'll say, look at the flirtatious, the flirtatious atmosphere at work.

And oh, this person loves me. They respect me. They understand me.

And your heart starts to see, oh, this is nothing wrong with this. They're building me up. They're encouraging me.

And then three months later, you're at a hotel, and your marriage is gone. What happened? The deceitfulness of sin, it always works that way. Ask any alcoholic, it started with the first drink.

Ask any, somebody addicted to painkillers, it started with the first surgery. See, it just, the sin paints this picture. And that's what the enemy does.

He waits. He waits until an opportune time to drop the hammer and tries to destroy us. So that's why God says, remove it now.

Remove it now. That's what confession, that's why confession is so important. Don't go around hiding and hoping, and people think a certain way of me.

Yeah, we already know. We're all sinners. So bring that to the light.

Once you bring sin to the light, it dies. You say, I'm struggling with this. I need help.

You bring it to the light. So be careful because when you sow sin consistently, you will eventually reap that harvest. That's the deceptiveness about it.

Number two, we have to prepare to receive. You have to get your heart like this to receive. What does that mean? It means digging up, stirring, and removing.

Ezra 10, 7-10, for Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Lord. There's a preparing that has to take place, which we've been talking about the last 20 minutes. It's interesting, the farmer I talked to said you have to remove the weeds and you have to remove the rocks.

Why? The weeds are the things that compete for the nourishment of the ground. I didn't realize that. It's not just weeds growing by the wheat, it's the weeds actually pull that water and that nutrients from the ground that the corn should be getting.

So what is pulling from us? Those things that should be directing us towards God, that spiritual nourishment, what is pulling? And that's why I make fun of Facebook a lot, but it's true. Or the media, is it not? Is the majority of the media really pulling us up and building us up spiritually? Let's just be completely honest. I don't even answer.

I know it's not. It's not. The prince of this world who has the airways, right? The majority of the time what we're focusing on is not building up spiritually.

So ask yourself, is this building me up spiritually? Or is it pulling me down? So you have to remove those things that are competing for God's attention. And it'll start with your time and your calendar. Look at your calendar and look at your clock.

How do you spend your time, your money, your calendar? That will show you what is competing for your time. Number three, rain is complete immersion. Compare again, like I said, the rain on concrete out front or rain on the soil.

What's going to be received? The difference between those who leave here receiving from God and those who don't are the difference between concrete and this type of ground when it rains. The heart's not ready. The heart's not going to receive.

I mean, think about this. God is raining down daily. He's raining down righteousness daily.

How many people, how many people, they're not prepared. God's saying, I'm raining down righteousness. Guess what's happening today? NFL.

Guess what? Oh, I'm too busy. I have to go to Home Depot. I'm too busy.

I'm too busy. And God's raining down righteousness. He wants to bring that water on that soil, but we're not preparing our hearts to receive.

It's very important. And I like the fourth point. Seek until he comes for it is time to seek the Lord till he comes and rains righteousness on you.

We just read that earlier. It's a season. Many people get frustrated because it's not happening right now.

Well, this is not, they invented the microwave for food, not for spiritual things. God, I've learned, and this is a challenge for me. Type A personality wants answers now, wants to get things done.

God's not in my time frame. He's not on my clock. So you've got it.

God, no matter what happens, I'm going to seek you until you come. I don't feel like praying, so I'm going to pray. I don't feel like reading your word, so I'm going to read your word.

I don't see the difference right now. God, I'm still struggling, so I'm just going to go back to that lifestyle. God says, don't go back to that lifestyle.

I'm working in the spiritual realm. I'm pulling down strongholds. I'm preparing your heart.

I'm showing you to trust me in the midst of the storm, in the midst of the battle. Will you still hold on to the anchor when the sea billows roll? I think there's a song about that, right? Will you still trust me when that happens? I mean, this is a good reminder. The guy who wrote that song, Horatio Spafford, something like that, lost his daughters at sea.

Their boat hit something and all of his daughters were drowned in the ocean. We have problems? All of them. And he went over that same spot where his daughters were, and he wrote that famous hymn.

It is well with my soul. It is well with my soul. I mean, that would have sent most people off the deep end.

There's no God. I hate God. There's no God now.

He says, seek me no matter what. Seek me no matter what. And that's what we have to do.

If you want righteousness to be poured down, if you want, I still have an anger problem. I still have a hard heart. I still, God says, still seek me.

I'm breaking through. I'm breaking through. Do you break down a wall one brick at a time, right? Same things.

Many times, don't be discouraged. Be encouraged. Many strongholds don't just fall down.

We come, we pray, God, I need brokenness. I need you to break this completely out. And he doesn't.

Sometimes it's one brick at a time. And that's why this point is so important. Seek him until he comes.

We'll wait months for a home to close escrow, years for a dream vacation, and a lifetime for retirement. But we're too busy to seek God. And the fifth point where we're closed is reap in mercy.

The Bible says that if you do these things, you will reap in mercy. It's interesting. God's mercy is available right now.

If you don't know him, his mercy, his grace is available right now. But the only way to reap that mercy is to prepare the heart. That's why the Bible says if you confess that Christ is Lord, if you repent, if you turn of your wicked ways, acknowledge your dependency on God and say, God, I need you.

You just prepared the heart to receive the mercy and the grace of God. And I want to clarify those two things. Mercy is compassion shown to somebody who it's within their punishment or it's within their power to punish you.

It's almost like a sheriff seeing somebody get you're getting pulled over and you're going to jail for a while. He says, no, you need to get to church. I'm letting you go.

That's mercy. Grace is the free and unmerited favor of God. So see when he saves us.

I didn't deserve it. I deserve hell as bad as I as hard as I try. I'm still there's wickedness in there, especially when we're unconverted, right? There's just tremendous.

And we deserve we don't deserve God, but in his mercy, he saves us. And then it's because of his grace, unmerited favor, the blessings of God are poured out on us like so when we sing that song, how deep the father's love for us how vast beyond all measure that he should give his only son to make a wretch his treasure. What what wonderful who could write that but under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to write a song like that.

That is so true. He was that we were saying that song last week. I don't care if we sang it yesterday.

My goodness, my goodness, we are spoiled as spoiled gets. I mean, I shouldn't talk. I mean, I shouldn't I maybe I can't relate, but I hit rewind on my YouTube and rewind and rewind and rewind.

I need 2030 minutes before my heart begins to fill and penetrate the penetrating power of God. How deep the father's love for us a God that created all of universe is beyond measure that he should give his only son to make a wretch his treasure. Do you understand what happened on that cross? He gave his only son to be beat by the creation that he created because of me and he turned this wretch that should be dead and buried in Lancaster.

Most of you do so don't get all uppity on me. We should be dead and he saved us. He made a wretch his treasure, a treasure that we can stand before God.

My goodness, I don't know why people have a problem with worship. It doesn't make any sense to me. They can go home and who's playing later today.

I have no clue. They can get all excited, paint their face and grab a 12 pack of Budweiser and sit down and get all excited. But when it comes to God saving a wretch like me, we somehow forget what happened.

That's why Jesus says remember and return, remember and return, remember and return. That's the whole point of preaching many times is soul-wrenching, heart-hurting, gut-wrenching truth. And then we leave here.

We should leave here encouraged saying, God, you saved me. I am so encouraged. I'm going to live my life different.

I'm going to seek you. I'm going to break up the fall of ground. It's time to seek the Lord.

But if you leave here still grumbling and complaining and hard-hearted, there's some serious things going on in your heart because it's not penetrating. It's that rain is hitting concrete. And I just came with a 60-pound jackhammer and it's time to break up that fall of ground.

You give me an air compressor and it's an 80-pound jackhammer and we can break up some concrete. Better yet, I'll just get a backhoe with the big digging bar on the back of it and do some serious damage. That's what God's Word does.

But if something's not allowing that, what's going on? What's it going to take? I mean, I can't preach much more passionately than that. God's Spirit can't be much more passionately than that. I go to churches and I hear worship.

You guys don't know what you have here. The worship is powerful. It's heart-searching.

The message, the time of prayer, the leadership you have here. This is God moving what is going on. The reason is breaking up your fall of ground.

You might say, Shane, you sure gave us a spanking today. Well, we all need one. See, here's what happens.

Here's what people don't realize. He spans me first. He just, I'm going to humble you.

I'm going to break you. I'm going to, you're just going to, what he does in my heart, I'm just trying to get it in your heart. And all of us together.

This sermon applies to all of us. You don't think I have fall of ground? I mean, the media, all these things people are posting. It just draws us away from God.

And critical hearts, negative hearts, all these things are stopping God. And I feel, and maybe I'll share this with you in more detail, but I feel that God is going to pack this place. Whether it's two services, whatever it is, there's a church in Washington.

John Corson is the pastor in Applegate. People drive 20 minutes and they have 2,500 people. Now, I'm not saying it because we're caught up in numbers or I'm caught up in numbers.

I'm happy with whatever God wants to do. But when you can get that many people to come out of their way and worship God, that's called commitment. You have people on fire for God, wanting to hear from God.

I see times where I, throw that clock in the trash. Who cares? People are worshiping God in the places, erupting with the praises to the Father. The kids ministry is flourishing.

Kids are coming to the Lord. Things are happening where God is moving. Can anybody get healed here? I mean, what, what happened? I read Acts and I'm like, what, what is going on? Why can't we get healed of certain things? And why can't we be set free? Why? Sometimes you have not because you ask not, but often it's because the fall of ground is not broken up when we can't receive from God.

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