

Call of Christ to the Ministry

by Shane Idleman

Shane Idleman's sermon emphasizes the call of Christ to the ministry, highlighting the importance of truth, emotional expression, and the role of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Duration: 41:57

Scripture: Jeremiah 17:9, Matthew 9:35, Matthew 28:19-20, John 14:13-14, Romans 12:1-2, 1 Corinthians 15:58, Ephesians 4:11-12, Philippians 4:13, 2 Timothy 4:2, Hebrews 10:24-25

Topics: "Ministry", "The Power of Christ"

Description

Shane Idleman emphasizes the call of Christ to the ministry, discussing the power of Christ over all aspects of life, including the demonic realm. He stresses the importance of aligning experiences with Scripture rather than allowing emotions to dictate truth, and highlights the necessity of genuine ministry that includes teaching, preaching, and healing. Idleman encourages believers to actively participate in ministry, reminding them that the harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few, and that true ministry requires hard work and commitment. He concludes by affirming the centrality of Christ in all aspects of life and ministry, urging listeners to call upon His name for healing and deliverance.

Transcript

The message is the call of Christ to the ministry. And it's really part two of last week's message that I didn't get through, because of just me talking up here too much. So, my daughter's in here, I see, and she says I'm boring every time.

So, don't say that tonight, okay? Daddy's not going to be boring. But I know, little kids have a different view. Anyway, the power of Christ, we left off last week, the power of Christ over the demonic realm, the power of Christ over Satan, the power of Christ pretty much over everything in our lives.

How does Christ exhibit that power in our lives to conquer certain areas? So, if you didn't see that message, go view it, it's on our website. Now, where I left off, and I don't want to just kind of throw these notes away, I want to talk to you about where we left off in looking at a genuine work of the Holy Spirit. A genuine work of the Holy Spirit cannot go outside the bounds of God's character.

So, anytime you wonder, okay, is the Holy Spirit in that? The Holy Spirit cannot go outside the bounds of God's character, and also, as we see written in His revealed Word. So, what does that look like? If you see something happening with worship or demonic realm, that cannot go outside the bounds of God's

character. I didn't say it can't go outside the bounds of preference, because it will.

Many people prefer different things, and we have to be careful in this area of preference, because sometimes we use it as a gauge on which to measure spirituality in other people. Well, I prefer this, or I prefer that. So, preferences, we have to distinguish preferences from truth when it comes to this area.

I like what Martin Lloyd-Jones said, we should never, never interpret Scripture in the light of our experience, but rather interpret our experiences in the penetrating light of Scripture. And really, what I'm doing now is I'm talking about last week's message. We talked about the demonic realm, and we talked about bizarre things happening, and sometimes people say, I just felt a certain way, or just pray for this feeling, or I get this feeling, or even those in the New Age movement have feelings of euphoria, and this state of ecstasy.

So, that's why we have to be very careful. And again, we should never interpret Scripture in the light of our experiences, but interpret our experiences in the light of Scripture. In other words, if somebody has an experience, we don't interpret the Bible based on that experience.

Well, we need to change this, we need to take out this, it doesn't say this, they're acting weird, I know they're acting weird, Shane, don't quench and grieve the Spirit of God. You know, let's use this experience to interpret Scripture, where Scripture says the opposite. This is our gauge by which we interpret our experiences.

And emotions, our emotions are primarily a vehicle for expression. They're not a gauge for truth. So, think about that.

Our emotions are a vehicle for expressing. When your first baby was born, or your second, or your third, or your fourth, when you're at the hospital, there's a little bit of emotions there, right? I hope, or on your wedding day, or when your favorite team wins. I mean, there's emotions there.

So, emotions are a vehicle for expressing ourselves. And people sometimes say, oh, it's just emotional, and sometimes I want to jump up and down and say, good, good, we need some emotions in the church sometimes. Why is everybody excited when their favorite team wins, or we're excited about this, but in church we have to come, oh, we can't get emotional, we can't get to, we can't just, we've got to, you know, just do this, and don't get emotional.

God-given emotions are good. He gave us those emotions. I thank God we're not puppets.

Don't feel anything, don't care. I mean, that's why when you feel something emotional, it's a good thing. Or it can be, as long as we gauge it by Scripture.

Now, also, just feeling emotional doesn't necessarily mean it's a good thing. You can feel emotional when they sing the Pledge of Allegiance, right? Or Star Spangled Banner. I get emotional, but we don't drape the cross with the flag.

You know, so emotions, emotions are not a gauge for truth. In other words, many people are, especially you're going to see this in our culture, Dale, these hot-button issues that you see in the paper. You know, I won't mention all of them right now.

But people get real emotional about that, and they use that as a gauge for truth sometimes. Well, I feel this way. Or I was born this way.

Or why don't we just do this, and I feel. I feel. And that begins to gauge everything.

And then what comes on the scene is relativism, right? Everything is relative based on how I feel. What's the old logo or the old motto? If it feels good, do it. Yeah, if it feels good, do it.

The Bible says if it feels good, check yourself at the door. Look in Scripture. Does it line up with Scripture? Because if it feels good, do it, it's not necessarily something that's biblical.

So again, that's where I left off last week. I didn't want to spend too much time on that. But I like what Jonathan Edwards said.

And as some of you know, he was one of the primary theologians during the Great Awakening in our country in the 1700s. And I like to read all about the revivals and the awakenings and the work of the Holy Spirit and all these things empowering the church. And the church is just thriving and growing, and bars are closing down, and everything, jails are empty.

And why is this? Because when the Spirit of God moves, lives are radically changed. And after studying revival, he noted five things that I think are important. Number one, when there's an experience, God awakening His people, it elevates the truth.

The truth is elevated, not minimized. The truth is looked to, not avoided. And a lot of times in these experience-oriented movements, and these points I'm bringing out are more tied in with last week, but I didn't want to just throw them in the trash.

Because any time the Holy Spirit is moving, truth will be elevated, not put to the side, not trampled on. And when we say, let's bring out the truth, and people say, oh no, let's put that aside. We don't need that.

You bunch of Bible thumpers. We've got to be open to new things. Be careful there.

Number two, Christ is exalted. Not the person, not the ministry, not this, not that. Christ is exalted.

Satan is opposed. Number four, points people to the Scriptures, and it results in a love for God and others. That's a true work of the Holy Spirit.

So a lot of times you'll see maybe some bizarre thing happen in some churches, just bizarre. It's like, wow, that's just weird. Of course, they say, well, you're just quenching and grieving the Spirit of God.

Just got to be open. If it's God, it's God. Anything goes, right? Well, not necessarily.

If the people leaving there don't experience God, the truth isn't elevated, Christ isn't magnified, Satan is opposed, they don't have a true or genuine love for God and His Word, then it was just a circus environment. It was just entertainment. So we have to gauge our emotions off of truth.

Why? Because Jeremiah said the heart is deceitful and desperately wicked. Who can know it? For I, the Lord, I judge the heart, I judge the mind, and I give every man according to his ways, according to his doings. And that's interesting.

I thought about that Scripture. Scripture's right on. I mean, the heart is deceitful and desperately wicked.

We have something inside of us that is hell-bent on leaving God, that is desperately wicked. If it was given full reign, oh man, wow. If it was given full reign, that's why we have to put restraints on it.

Guard our heart for it's the wellspring of life. Guard your mind, your affections. You have to guard these things as a soldier doing battle because the heart left to itself is desperately wicked.

So the Word of God pulls it back. Prayer pulls it back. Worship pulls it back.

So that's why I encourage people all the time, pray and worship. Well, I don't like to do that. I just want to sit there and wait for your message.

No, no, no. You don't get it. That's why nothing's changing.

It's in that prayer and worship that the heart is guarded, that the heart is protected because you're putting it in submission to Christ. It's very healthy. So then we left off right here.

Chapter 9 of Matthew, verse 35. Chapter 9, verse 35. The compassion of Jesus.

Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them because they were weary and scattered like sheep having no shepherd. You know, I want to remind everybody tonight that Jesus is still in the business of compassion.

I believe that He has still moved with compassion for His people. You're not following some shepherd who's given up on his flock and has moved to a different city. This is a shepherd who we bow to, who we trust, who we worship that has compassion on His people.

Remember what I quote a few weeks ago, God had compassion on His people. That's why He sent His messengers. That's why He sends His messengers.

That's why He sends difficult messages to His people because He has compassion on them and on His dwelling place. But they mocked His messengers, despised His word, and scoffed at His prophets until the anger of the Lord arose against His own people. But let's not forget what started that, because He had compassion on His people.

So we serve a Jesus who still has compassion on His people. And it's interesting, I pulled three things from this part of the text, even though it's real brief here. Jesus went along teaching and preaching and healing.

And I believe that's three aspects of ministry you'll always see. Because we have to teach us how to live. That's vitally important.

Teach us how to live. But then you have to preach so people wake up from their spiritual slumber. You have to teach and you have to preach.

And you don't want to have an unhealthy balance there because what will happen? They'll either gravitate all towards preaching and emotionalism or they'll gravitate just towards teaching. They'll become modern-day Pharisees and nothing changes. And then we see the third aspect here is healing.

Jesus went along healing. And how does that apply to us? Well, in many ways, this is a helps ministry, I believe. There are people in this church, even in this valley, all over, that are in desperate need of help in all these areas.

Mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. So as Christians, that's what we should go around doing. Teaching and preaching, sometimes awakening.

Not like what I do necessarily, but you can awaken people and say, Listen, you're on a collision course to disaster. You need to wake up. Here's what the Bible says.

And then we come alongside and we help them. We minister to them. That's what ministry is.

Sometimes I think we hear the word ministry and we think, Oh, I'll just go and do that. But ministry encompasses many different items, and that's what I want to talk about tonight. On this area of teaching and healing, the funny thing is preaching.

We often don't see Jesus as a preacher, do we? Oh, no, no. We don't see Him as that. But He said, I came to preach the Gospel.

Jesus said, for this very reason, I have come to preach. Jesus came to awaken His people. And He hates the sin He sees in us.

Have you ever lost anybody to cancer? You hate that cancer. Right? Right? That's why we hate the sin that we see in people. A lot of times the little cliché, love the sinner, hate the sin.

Love the sinner, hate the sin. It can become a cliché, I know, but it's powerful truth. We're to love the sinner.

But we're to hate the sin that's destroying families. It's destroying our nation. It's destroying the church.

It's destroying the truth. That's why we get a lot of negative feedback, right, when we preach the truth. Because they don't like to hear that part of it.

And Jesus is a preacher. He's really preaching, and the word here is to proclaim. He's proclaiming the good news.

I've come to set the captive free to proclaim. And when you proclaim, it's not just sitting there going through your Bible. Sometimes it's awakening people, and it's getting emotional and stirring and convicting.

I just had this happen to me this week. I was taking my little dog on a walk in the desert, and I let him off the leash. And the next thing I hear, he's right, he's about ten... Oh, Toby, that's a rattlesnake! Oh, get over here! Am I just going to... Well, I'll just wait, you know.

Is that what I'm going to do? Why? Because there's danger. There's danger. Come, get over here! Get over here! I'm not coming to you.

There's a rattlesnake right between us. I can see it. I can see it coiled up.

Someone, come over here. Get over here now. Stop playing with the snake.

Get over here. Get over here. Get over here now.

Shane, that's me. That's loud. Right.

I have to gauge it because of the danger between us. That's all preaching is. It's emotional because they see the danger between the pulpit and the pew.

Don't go there. That leads to abyss. That leads to hell.

That leads to destruction. That leads to divorce. That leads to addiction.

That leads to jail. That leads... And you fill in the blank. So Christ was a wonderful preacher, calling the people back to Him.

He would preach and then He would sit and teach. And He would heal. That's powerful ministry.

Sometimes we get caught up on just one of those and then what happens? We begin to judge. Right? Well, why don't they do this? And why don't they do this? And that judgmentalism comes in. I like what Robert McShaney said.

He died at 29. But he's one of Scotland's most anointed preachers, a preacher hundreds of years ago. He spent a lot of time in the prayer closet and fasting.

He died at an early age. But different biographies and things record that people would begin weeping when he even stepped to the pulpit. Just that powerful anointing, spending time with God.

And people would just break under His presence. And Scotland experienced a powerful move of God. He said, most of God's people are content to be saved from the hell that is without.

They are not so anxious to be saved from the hell that is within. And I ponder that because that is true. We're content.

I'm not going to hell. I've got my out of hell free card right here. Monopoly.

I'm good now. But the hell within needs to be dealt with. And that's one aspect where preaching comes in.

When Christ preached, when I preached, we deal with the hell that's within. Because it doesn't want to give up its stronghold easily. It's got to be awakened as well.

You've got to go right to the heart. That's one thing teaching does not do. As much as I love teaching, I listen to Chuck Smith's teaching on the Bible, all 700 tapes.

It took me a year and a half. I love teaching. I've got MacArthur's teaching.

I've got David Jeremiah's teaching. I've got Alistair Begg's teaching. I love teaching.

But there comes a time when you need to preach. When teaching just isn't going to cut it. When you've got to waken the church up.

That's where preaching comes in. It's like God brings in a different... We've been so taught it's pathetic. We've got Bible apps all over our phones.

We've got commentaries. The underground churches in China and Egypt and Afghanistan, they don't even own a Bible. And we're full of teaching.

We're so full of teaching, we like to argue about every little nuance of this. The rapture and this and women in ministry and the gifts of the Spirit. And we want to just argue about worship.

Oh Lord, don't get me started on the worship wars. The old hymns and new hymns. Why are they standing? Why are they sitting? Why are they raising their hands? Why aren't they raising their hands? Why are your services so charismatic? Why aren't they so charismatic? Just worship.

I don't like those songs. I don't know those songs. It just goes on and on and on.

We should just thank God that we're able to worship Him. Thank God. Now don't get me wrong, I love deep theological songs in the old hymns.

But I also love In Love in the Oceans by Hillsong. I mean, that's powerful. Songs that we're worshiping God.

So just be very careful in this area that we can be so well taught that we become a Pharisee. I'll just call it like it is because the Pharisees were the most religious people of their day. And I see it all the time.

Do you want to know why? Because I can drift on the Pharisee side real easy. It's not too hard for me to drift on the Pharisee side. Real easy.

Just yesterday we were at a party for my mom's 70th anniversary. And friends were from into town. And they said, Oh Shane, I've got to give you two people you've got to listen to on the TV.

And they gave me their names. I won't give you their names. And they're not heretical, but they're not, well, we'll leave it at that, right? What I would be watching and listening to.

So in my mind, oh, let me tell you about it. I'm already having an argument to just put down everything that they just were so excited about. So instead, oh, thank you.

I'll check, thank you. I'm not talking about dangerous teachers and warning people, but just preference. And I just, you know, certain people that I don't care to endorse and different things.

But in my mind, I'm already going to that Pharisee mode. It's already getting ready. Boom.

Because it can happen very easily. So we have to be careful. Because we have so much truth.

Our nation has so much Bible that we're forgetting the Bible that we've been reading. And actually, I know a lot of you will agree with this. The church as a whole is drifting from the Bible.

We're drifting from the Bible. I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about true Bible-believing Christians.

We're so fat on the Word of God that now we need to start doing some exercise. We need to start using what's inside of us. That's all calories are.

You know that, right? Calories are just energy I haven't expended yet, I haven't used yet. And if they're not used, where do they go? Everywhere. Same thing with the Word of God.

I've got all this energy, all this knowledge, but I'm not going to do anything with it. Well, that turns into pride. And that turns into arrogance.

And that turns into thinking we're super spiritual and we don't need to help people and God needs me really bad. God doesn't need us really bad. He chooses to use us for His glory.

Also, I think I'm going to, every week or two, do a recommended resource of a book I'm reading on a certain topic that will help. And this is a great one on this area of serving God. It's called *On Being a Servant of God* by Warren Wiersbe.

On Being a Servant of God, I just went through it again this week, and a lot of great things about it. He's had 45 years in ministry. So I would encourage you to get that book.

You can get it online, I think, everywhere pretty much. It's available everywhere. But Robert Murray McChaney also said this, a man who loves you the most is the man who tells you the most truth about yourself.

The person who loves you the most is the person who's going to tell you the most truth about yourself. So it falls into this preaching again. Jesus would tell us the truth.

He didn't candy coat or sugar coat anything, did he? He told people the truth. You whitewash tombs. You're full of dead men's bones inside.

And other people would say, listen, you've got sin in your life you need to turn from. And he would tell people the truth because of his love for them. So somehow the culture and the media and everybody gets this around where if you say anything hurtful, now you're being negative and unloving.

No, it's actually loving people want to warn and encourage people to get back on the right road. That's loving people. Parents want to do that, right? But we can't do it to the society.

Then it's hate speech. It's hate speech when we're trying to love. It doesn't make any sense.

Verse 37, the call of Jesus. Then he said to his disciples, the harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Let's all say that again.

The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore, pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into the harvest. Did you catch that? The harvest is plentiful.

It's everywhere, but the laborers are few. Now, there's a lot of Christians, but this word isn't dealing necessarily with Christians. It's dealing with a laborer.

Do you know what a laborer is? Picture the hot sun. You've got a shovel in one hand, digging bar in the other. You're laboring.

You're picking up, you know, going through the farms, and you're picking up the fruit, the vegetables. You're laboring. You're doing something.

You're building a house and constructing. All these things, you're laboring. So he says, listen, look at this bountiful harvest, but there's no laborers.

A lot of Christians, there's a lot of Christians, but not a lot of labors. It's really what's rewarding is the laboring. As rewarding it is to read your Bible and to study and to worship, do you know that the most rewarding aspect of it is when you serve others? That's why it's the hardest thing to do.

It's the hardest thing to do because flesh comes in, the feelings, I don't feel like it. I've got stuff to do. I just want to come to church, and then I'll go home, and I won't get upset.

I won't have to do anything. But God calls us to do things, and I believe that's where a lot of joy and peace is tied to. I think that's why a lot of Christians are moody and frustrated and irritated because they're not serving.

We're never designed to take it all in and not do anything with it. But what comes up? I'm too busy. Right? I've got lots going on.

I'm too busy. And we just quit. How about if I just said, you know what? I think tonight's my last Saturday.

I'm going to go back and make some real money. Not dealing with all these problems and issues. It's too hard.

This is too hard. I'll see you guys. I'll see you guys around.

This is too hard. It's too hard. I don't like doing it.

I'm busy. I'm a busy guy. I've got four little kids and a wife.

I'm writing books. I'm writing articles. I'm speaking.

I'm a busy guy. I don't need this. Why am I here? I'm just going to quit.

Why does that seem right? I can't. That's true. Committed.

Yeah, I know. But see, also, we're supposed to be committed Christians. When we commit to something, you can't back out two months later or three.

It's too hard now. Now, granted, I understand things come up, illness, injury, family. I'm very understanding.

But for the most part, the Christian church is not available. We're not available. And the reason is it's hard.

It's not too hard to come and sit in an air-conditioned room on soft chairs and hear something and go eat a nice dinner. That's not too hard. What's really hard is the laboring.

So I just encourage you that God is a rewarder of those who diligently labor in His work. Yes, when it gets tough. Actually, that's the best time to do it.

When you're about ready to bell out, that's the time to strengthen yourself and continue. Test the heart. I truly believe that somebody should never give up on Christian work just on emotions alone.

I don't feel like it's getting difficult. There's never a good reason. If God's calling you, hey, I need to take a season, I've prayed about it, I feel peace, okay, that's good.

But just because it's getting hard and difficult, yeah, that's usually probably when God's getting ready to work in your life, open some doors, fill you with the Spirit, a new dimension of ministry, but then we just bell out too soon. I don't want to do that. It's difficult.

So we are all laborers to some extent. The world is a mission field. Think about that.

Sometimes we think of just the church. But do you work anywhere? Do you have neighbors? Do you have friends? Do you run into people? The mission field's everywhere. We should be on high alert.

We're on the mission field for God. It's not just a missionary in a foreign land. This is us in the church.

The Christian is a person who makes it easy for others to believe in God. Wow. The Christian is a person who makes it easy for others to believe in God.

Do you make it easy for people to believe in God? Or do you turn them away by your attitude? I've not perfected this area. What about our kids? Think about that. The Christian is a person who makes it easy, makes our kids easy to believe in God.

That involves ministry and being in their lives. Let me just talk in this area of ministry real quick. Desire meets gifting.

Okay, so God gives you a desire, right? Like, I want to do that. I want to help in that area. And you're gifted for that.

He opens a door. But then it's not all roses. It's not a bed of roses.

You don't feel like going every single time. And this is just wonderful. Every single time.

It's laboring. It's laboring. It's like doing what you don't want to do.

You're telling your flesh. Now, we've talked about this lots of times. You're telling your flesh what to do.

We're going to go serve tonight. Yes, we are. I know you want to kick your feet up on the couch and eat some bonbons.

But we're going to go serve tonight. I know you want to text or email and get out of it. But we're going to go serve tonight.

I know you don't like doing this. And that's exactly why we're going to do it. Why is the church always in need of helpers? We don't need a lot of helpers.

Just some helpers. No, this isn't here only. It's everywhere.

You talk to most churches. Most churches will say, number one area that's the most difficult. Nursery and children's ministry.

Yep. And it's interesting. If I told somebody, can you be in charge? I don't think they'd ever quit.

Can you be in charge? Oh, absolutely. We'd see them for years. This is the honest sermon tonight.

Can you be in charge? Oh, absolutely. They'd be like drill sergeants here. They'd be on time.

They'd be committed. But when we say, can you help in this area? Oh, grr. Why is that? Because we want to be in charge.

Isn't it interesting? We have a surplus of speakers. I mean, you want to come speak at the pulpit? Oh, oh, oh, oh, yes, yes, yes. I'll be there.

We have a surplus of worship. I've got people emailing me applications for worship. So, no, we're good.

We're good. We're good. Every month it goes by.

Do you need a worship leader? I'm from this area. We have people from, you know, there's big churches in San Diego. You know, they're moving this area.

I could be a, no, no, we're good. Plethora, plethora of leadership, plethora of speakers, plethora of worship. But when it comes to the serving aspect, what happens? Think about that.

If I told both services, hey, I'm gone next Saturday, I need somebody to speak, any volunteers, there would be a line up to here. I'll do it. I'll do it.

Then we have to determine, are you called? Are you gifted? Because you've got to bless the body. But then, hey, we need children's ministry helpers. Guess how many people we'll see tonight.

Why is that? Think about it. This is just self-examination. Why is that? Well, in a nutshell, one puts us on a pedestal.

One puts us where we're not seen. We're not glorified. We're not magnified.

We're not recognized. We're not applauded for our efforts. It's hard.

But let me remind you, that was the job of your Savior. Made himself of no reputation. Took on the form of a man, sinful man.

And he humbled himself to the point of death. Even death on a cross. That's all we're doing is doing what Christ did.

And Oswald Chambers said in his great work, My Utmost First Highest, that God will bury his men and women in the midst of paltry things. No monuments are erected for them. No songs are sung for them.

They're in a place where they cannot be seen. Because that's where they do the most work for God. Think about that.

I mean, people idolize the pulping. I mean, oh, he's changed here. I'm a servant leader.

I've got guidelines in 1 Timothy 3 about 10 things that I have to have in my character. I have to come and I have to serve and I have to lead. I have to lead by example.

You guys get to email people back mean emails and hang up on them or cuss at them. I can't do any of that. I just got to take it and suck it up and just, oh, work on my, because I'm leading by example.

It's difficult. This isn't a glorified position. And that's why I talk to a lot of young guys and they'll say, oh, I just want to, oh, man, you better be called to do it because it will kill you.

Think about it. Less pay for more work, for more headaches. New levels bring more devils.

Dealing with all the stuff, it's hurting. A lot of times you're hurting. There's great mountaintop experiences, but there's tremendous valleys.

You're always trying to please, always trying to this. You've got to be on high alert. How are you going to beat last week's sermon? I have no idea.

And then how are you going to beat next week? I have no idea. And then these expectations. Now people are calling, emailing the website saying we're coming in from North Dakota or Hawaii or we want to be there.

Are you going to be there to speak? I'm like, oh, wow, this is a lot to hold. I say, I don't know. I might be sick, but I'm planning on it.

Give God the glory. He's the one doing it. We're just empty vessels.

And he wants to work, I believe, in many lives in here, just empty. Say, Lord, what do you want me to do? What do you want me? We should have a children's ministry sign up waiting list. We should have a waiting list for ushering and a waiting list for sound and a waiting list for all the things we need.

And trust me, I didn't plan to be this, oh, let me go get them sermon. Because guess who used to sit in that pew four years ago? And every time they asked, oh, I'm just not gifted for that. That's not my calling.

That's not my gifting. I know, I know, I've been there. And I know, I ran from that.

I ran from this for a year. I said, no, no, no, no. Because it's comfortable, right? And there's nothing wrong with being comfortable sometimes.

Enjoying entertainment, relaxing. God's given us those things. But there comes a time when the person has to labor.

Labor for God. It's very healthy. Here's a few reasons why people send themselves into the ministry.

To prove I'm spiritual or important. I know, I know, probably a half dozen men that came to me in the past couple years that wanted to be a pastor. None of them are, and I don't know if they're going to be.

But I think some of these reasons are why they want it. Look, I've arrived. Look, Dad, I've arrived.

Look, you said I was a nobody. I arrived. I'm important.

Look at me. I'm important. And Charles Spurgeon said in his famous book, Lectures to My Students, he said if you can do anything else, do it.

Because if you can, then you were not called by God. See, a true calling of God, you cannot run from it very long. Jonah, Paul rode to Damascus.

God will just knock you off your horse. Here's what you're doing now. You can't run from it.

So that's a good way of self-examining our hearts. Never get into ministry or missions to prove anything. A lot of times we do that.

I am on the mission field. Look what I'm doing. I'm serving.

I'm going to Africa. Look what I'm doing. Aren't I so special? And we toot our horn, right? Look, look, look.

God says no. That's not true ministry. Also for validation, we have low self-esteem.

So if we can say, look, look what I'm doing, it raises self-esteem. This is a funny one for me. Many people get into this, or what I'm doing is a source of income and an easy job.

Wow. So what happens is when it's not easy, and when they're not feeling important, they bail out. See, if you go into things with the right motive, saying I'm going to serve in, actually I'm speaking at Donahue Nursery, I think in our nursery, Matt will verify this, we've had the same helpers for two years since we started.

Since we started almost. Or within a year or so. Same committed people.

We can count on them. But in all other areas. We just give up too easy.

Step out and serve. Apply spiritual disciplines and allow God to open your door. So many people out there are saying, okay, Lord, do you want me to do anything? Lord, do you want me to serve in this capacity? Lord, show me.

Number one, an open door. And I'm presenting many open doors tonight. This isn't by design.

I'm just kind of working this in as I'm feeling led, knowing that we need some help in some areas. So this is an open door. The church needs helpers.

But we want to make sure you've been here a while, six month policies, what we'd like to try to do to get to know people. Because not everybody's good and sincere and honest. I don't know if you knew that.

Even in the church. I actually avoid people now with the sign of the fish on their business card. Sometimes you just put that, and then they're terrible business people.

So you have to be very careful. So we need people serving and helping in all these areas. And here's what you do.

You step out and you serve. And you apply spiritual disciplines and allow God to open the door. I've seen many people have no idea.

Lord, what do you want me to do with my life? I'm getting retirement age or I'm getting out of college. What do you want me to do with my life? I have no idea. I have no idea.

They go on weeks and weeks and months and months. No idea. No idea.

And then they step out and serve. And God begins to direct them. Oh, now I can direct you because now you're a moving vessel.

See, I can direct a moving vessel. He just tilts it this way. But back at home with your feet up on the couch and bonbons, you can't move that.

That's why people sit there week after week and month after month and never do anything for God. It is very difficult, but it's the most rewarding thing you've ever done. When you go home and you know you've invested in the children, or when you go home and you know you've gotten help with ushering or the sound, you help the ministry, you go home lifted up, not beat up.

Sometimes it is. It's tiring. It's hard.

But you go home. That's where the joy comes from. See, we either experience the pain of discipline or the pain of regret.

The old folks used to teach a pain of discipline. Then the reward comes. See, you work hard, then you get paid.

Now we want to get paid and we might work. I can get political, but I'm not going to. Think about that.

We get paid, right? We work hard, a labor, and then you get paid. Same thing in Christian ministry. You seek God with all your heart.

I don't feel like it. You'll get paid when the filling of the Spirit comes and joy comes and peace comes. Peace has been elusive for years.

When that comes, you receive the baptism of His love and His power. Oh, that's life changing. But I had to go through a difficult season of pain to receive the reward.

Same thing in ministry. Yeah, this hurts. Scheduling is hard.

There's conflict. There's attitude adjustments. Now I've got to get here an hour before the service.

Now I've got to stay after. Yeah, it's difficult. It's hard.

But the reward comes later. You see how that works? So you've got to fight your feelings because your feelings will always lead you to the course of least resistance. Remember, we'll eat too much, we'll drink too much, we'll sleep too much.

We won't even go to work. We won't even go to church. If our feelings had complete control, we'd probably just sit in an air-conditioned house all day long just watching TV until we fell asleep.

And then we just want to sleep in a lot longer because the feelings can take control and they lead us in this area as well. So be careful there. Real ministry goes into the enemy's camp.

Real ministry goes into the enemy's camp. A lot of times we pick and we choose who we'll minister to, right? I think this is the time the children's ministry helpers have to make it over to their area. But many times in ministry we'll pick who we want to minister to.

I want the easy ministry that's not going to take a lot of time and I can say I did something. I'm not going to minister to those people. And it's usually those exact people who God calls us to.

Because we pick the course of least resistance even in the area of ministry. So keep that in mind. It's not going to be comfortable.

It might be smelly. It might be difficult. But that's what God calls us to do.

The flesh is never satisfied so it will fight you every single chance it gets on this. Closing. Let me close real quick.

The power. We talked about the power of Christ, the compassion of Christ, and the call of Christ. And everything culminates here.

You know how I like to end on a note about salvation. Because I can't just assume that everybody is in good standing with God. They've been hearing about Jesus a lot or they've been coming a few weeks.

But the power of Christ to save. That's probably the most important. That's why He came.

Born to die. He said for this very reason I have come to save you. So we can talk about the power of Christ and the passion of Christ and the compassion of Christ and the call of Christ on our life.

But there's nothing more important than the power of Christ to save. That's why the Bible says whosoever. Whosoever believes.

Whosoever calls. Whosoever returns to me. There's some of you tonight.

I know you might not be here again next Saturday. I might not ever see you again. This isn't by chance.

Church is not by chance. A Spirit filled Bible believing church. There's nothing by chance.

God draws people here to hear His Word being preached and proclaimed. And the truth is we are in desperate need of a Savior because we're sinners. And that's how a lot of times when you align yourself with the ministry.

Is once you're saved you want to serve others. You want to help others. And the power of Christ.

I could talk about this for another half hour. Peter on the cross wouldn't do it. You know that? A lot of times we look at the cross and we love the cross.

It means a lot to us. But the cross in and of itself was just a bunch of wood. Peter on the cross wouldn't do it.

Paul on the cross. James on the cross. Nobody.

It had to be Jesus Christ. The cross without Christ is pointless. The cross without Christ is pointless.

Ministry without Christ is pointless. Marriage without Christ is pointless. And life without Christ is pointless.

In a nutshell everything without Christ is pointless. So if you're in ministry without Christ as the center. Wrong direction.

Get back to the center. Return to your first love. That's what Jesus told the church.

Return to your first love. If Christ is not the center of your marriage. Guess what's going to happen to your marriage.

Bye bye. Divorce court. Here we go.

Rips apart because the world comes in. Christ has to be the center of everything. Ministry.

There's a lot of people in ministry where Christ is not the center. There's selfish ambitions. The flesh is there.

Some people aren't even saved in ministry. So Christ has to be the center of everything. The power of Christ to save.

The power of Christ to redeem. The power of Christ to heal. That's why I love that song.

Break every chain. Do you believe that? There's power in his name. There's power in the name.

Wow. It hasn't happened to me yet. Really.

Have you ever figured. Wonder might be the issue of the heart. The problem is never with Christ.

The problem is never with Christ. And some things don't happen instantaneously. I don't preach that.

Oh, you just call every sometimes healings or deliverance or strongholds or fight. It's a warfare. Paul talks about the warfare, waging warfare, the war against our soul.

Finally, brethren, it is warfare. But calling on the name of Christ, I know, makes darkness tremble. It makes demons tremble.

It makes everything come in order when we call upon the only name that saves. So do that during worship tonight. Even if you want to stay for the second service of worship, do that.

So I call upon whatever it is right now in your marriage or your finances, addictions. You feel hopeless. You feel lost.

You feel hurt. Whatever it is, you call in the name of Christ. He's not just sitting up there going, oh, you'll never reach me.

He's saying, come, come and call upon the only name that saves, the only name that heals, the only name that delivers, the only name that sets free, the only name that's going to cause the demonic realm to tremble in your presence. It's not you. It's Christ in us that does that.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/32/SID32154.mp3>

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