

Difficulties: Stepping Stones, Not Stumbling Blocks

by Shane Idleman

The sermon emphasizes the importance of trusting God's guidance and provision, even in the face of challenges and fears.

Duration: 42:26

Scripture: 1 Kings 17:1

Topics: "Revival", "Faith in Difficulties"

Description

Shane Idleman emphasizes that difficulties in life can serve as stepping stones rather than stumbling blocks, using the life of the prophet Elisha as a key example. He explains how Elisha's prophetic calling was to guide people back to God, often delivering messages they did not want to hear. The sermon highlights the importance of faith during challenging times, encouraging believers to seek God and trust in His provision, even when circumstances seem dire. Idleman also addresses the need for revival in the church and personal lives, urging listeners to confront their fears and seek God's guidance in reviving dead dreams and passions.

Transcript

We are going to do a quick survey through the life of Elisha out of the Old Testament. And the title of the message is Difficulties, Stepping Stones, Not Stumbling Blocks. I'm going to say that again.

Difficulties can be stepping stones, not what? Stumbling blocks. Now the prophets, I talk about Elisha being a prophet. What were the prophets? Well the prophets, who were they? They were primarily in the Old Testament.

And what God would do, he would raise up a prophet, a prophetic voice, for what was the main reason? To bring the people back to God. To be that spokesperson, to be that voice crying in the wilderness. That's why Jesus said there was no prophet better than John the Baptist, because of that calling he had.

And then you get into the New Testament, and you don't have what would be called the prophets. The prophets were primarily, capital P, that would preach, and they were statesmen, they were reformers, they were authors, they were preachers, reformers, statesmen, and authors. They would write books of the Bible, they would call the people back.

And then we get into the New Testament, and as a church that believes in the gifts of the Holy Spirit, we still believe that there is that prophetic type of calling. You have a calling of an evangelist, say Greg Laurie, Billy Graham. You have a calling of a pastor, teacher.

You have that apostolic calling, which would be planting churches. An apostle, small a. They are called to plant churches, and they go out and they build churches. And then you have someone who has a prophetic type calling, maybe a Leonard Ravenhill, if you've heard that name, or A.W. Tozer, and that different prophetic calling.

I feel I have that calling even for today. God has given me that John the Baptist, voice crying in the wilderness type of call. And we can't put that on other people.

Why don't you preach like this? Well, they might not have that call. They might be more that evangelist, or that shepherd, and that pastor, teacher. And many times you'll see that those characteristics are in one person, shepherding, pastoring, that prophetic type of call.

But I'm hesitant on using that word prophet nowadays with the churches and the charismatic movement, and you've got this weird stuff. But there is a prophetic calling, and that's what Elisha had. He had the prophetic calling of God on his life.

So who were they primarily in the Old Testament? What did they do? Well, they told people what they didn't want to hear. If I could sum it up for you. They would tell the kings what they didn't want to hear.

Elisha would tell Ahab, Jeremiah would tell such and such, Isaiah would tell such and such, and Joel would tell the king, and Amos and Obadiah, and they would have different prophets that would come alongside the king. That's why I'm glad that at least this president, maybe other presidents allow people, bold Christians, to be part of their advisory board, and to speak into the life that give that prophetic type calling. Where were they? Obviously, back in the time of Jesus, they were in the nation of Israel, written.

The prophets lived probably all the way from, you see the word with Saul, Solomon, David, down the kings, down the line of the kings, but they're actually called seers before that. S-E-E-R, seer, meaning vision. They could see what God was doing, and then they became a prophet, like the prophet Samuel.

Now, we find Elisha, though, he is not a, well, there's not a book of the Bible written after him. So we start in 1 Kings 17, there's too much text to put up there, so you can listen or follow along in 1 Kings 17, chapter 17, and it said, Elisha the Tishbite, and if you look at the Septuagint, what that is, it's a Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, and they gave a lot more clarity here. It talks about the land he was from, where he was from in the area there, and that's what Tishbite means.

Elisha the Tishbite, the area he was from, which was in Gilad. He said this to Ahab, who was the king. He said, as the Lord God of Israel lives before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years except at my word.

So he predicted a drought, and that's often what they did. They would predict things. So a prophet was also, not only did he foretell, he foretold things that would happen, and how they would measure a true prophet was that if it came to pass, he's a prophet.

If it didn't, well, the outcome wasn't good. They could stone that person. So you're very careful when you said, thus sayeth the Lord.

It's a good rule to follow today, too, I believe. So as the Lord God of Israel lives, he said, there will be no rain. Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, get away from here and turn eastward and hide by the brook Cherub, which flows into the Jordan.

And it will be that you shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there. So Elisha is going to go to a place where there is water by this brook, and also the ravens were going to bring him food, nourishment to eat. So we can learn something here.

The word of the Lord never fails. When God says something, it will come to pass. What he says in his word will not fail.

Has he spoken something to you that you know that it was God putting it on your heart? You know that it confirmed it in scripture. You know, the Lord spoke to me in this area. Don't give up.

Don't give up, because that word doesn't fail. If it was God, it will not fall to the ground. It will not fail.

Now we might say, was it from the Lord? Was it not? That's a whole other sermon. But if you know God has given you a word, and what I mean by that, sometimes you're reading through scripture and something leaps out, or you'll wake up in Psalm 118. What is that? And God begins to direct you through his word.

That word will never fail. But Shane, it's not happening. Welcome to the club.

It's hard to wait, isn't it? But that's really when your faith is tested. See, faith isn't really faith until it's tested. If it's not tested, that's not faith.

That's, well, I see it happening. I don't need faith. Faith, the Bible talks about faith as the evidence of things not seen.

It's something we hope for that isn't seen yet. Also, this is a good reminder that famines can have a person, I'm sorry, famines can have a purpose that is not immediately known. Anytime something begins to dry up in our life, a famine comes in financially, relationally.

Maybe God is distant. There's often a purpose. There can be a purpose in that God-given famine.

When God begins to remove things from our life, there can be a purpose if we seek him. And then it says, the Lord provided. So the Lord is not limited by resources.

Sometimes we forget that. We think, well, God's limited. He's not gonna be through on this one.

So we see here, he's not limited by resources. He can do whatever he wants, whenever he wants, however he wants. And then verse five, it talks about Elisha.

So he went and did according to the word of the Lord. And it happened after a while that the brook dried up. Isn't this interesting? God said, I'm gonna give you a brook.

Go buy this brook. Here's all your water. Here's your nourishment.

Oh, this is wonderful. Have you ever tasted a fresh brook from the snow-covered mountains? It's pretty refreshing. And then what happened? It dries up.

It's gone. And it happened after a while that the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land. So we see also this can be a test.

Will Elisha do what God told him to do? Will I do according to what God has called me to do? And often, the things we can rely on, here's a good lesson tonight. The things we often can rely on, God might allow them to dry up. Whether it's that job, that relationship, that sense of nourishment, that you get nourishment somewhere, something, you're relying on something.

Isn't it interesting how we rely so often? Many people in the workforce, like, I'm just relying on that check. It's coming month to month for the next 30 years. I've got this nice retirement.

I've got this nice plan. I've got this wonderful thing laid out. And then the brook dries up.

Now, a couple different things here. This will hopefully motivate us to seek God even more. When things begin to dry up, we begin to seek God even more.

Or what did God do in this case? He caused Elisha to move to a different location. So don't rule that out. Sometimes God might dry up your brook to get you to move off that mountain.

He might allow a difficulty, a season in life, something God will take away in order to move you on. So again, we see the difficulties can be stepping stones, not stumbling blocks, if we allow God to move us. And then we see, he's going to switch stories now, verse 8. Then the word of the Lord came to him saying, Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon and dwell there.

See, I've commanded a widow there to provide for you. So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, indeed a widow was there gathering sticks.

And he called to her and said, Please bring me some water and bread. I paraphrase that briefly. So we see here, is God speaking to you daily in his word.

He told Elisha, go, arise, go and do this. And it's so important, folks, if we just, we need to spend that time with God. And I believe he'll speak to you through his word.

Arise and do this. Arise and go here. Talk to this person.

Take this test that I'm giving you, that you're going through, maybe at work and holding on to a job and a hard work environment. We just never know. You may be nervous, but there is peace.

So think about that when determining God's will and listening to his voice. You might be nervous. Anyone nervous about doing something for God, but you know it's God? There's peace though, correct? Because many times people say, Well, Shane, I have peace, but oh, this is going to be challenging.

Yes, it will. God's will isn't always easy and no conflict, no friction. It often involves conflict.

It involves friction. It involves going against the grain, walking against the direction and the flow of the world. But you have peace knowing, Okay, this is what God has called me to do.

This is what he wants me to do. But he's telling her to make him some bread and bring him some water. But she said, As the God lives, I do not have bread.

I only have a handful of flour in a bin and a little oil in a jar. And see, I'm gathering a couple of sticks that I may go and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat of it and then die. So this is what you call a last meal.

She didn't have any other resources. Everything had dried up. And God was asking Elisha to have her make him something to eat.

So this is where we find true faith is always challenged, always stretched, and always tested. This is where Christians often get worn out and give up. We say, Well, this is getting difficult.

Well, yeah, that's sometimes part of the plan. But this is my last resource. But we're running out of money.

But God wants me to give this or do this. But I don't see how this is going to work. But God is not restricted by what we are restricted with, our financial means, our boundaries.

God has no restrictions. So he often calls us like Elisha, like the lady here, to exhibit true faith. And then Elisha said to her, Do not fear.

Go and do as you have said, but make me a small cake from it first and bring it to me. And afterward, make some for yourself and your son. For thus says the Lord God of Israel, the bin of flour shall not be used up, nor shall the jar of oil run dry until the day the Lord sends rain on the earth.

So basically saying, Don't fear. Don't fear. Go and make these things for me.

And God is going to give you a surplus. And I've seen that many times. When we step out in faith and we give God something, whatever that is, whether it's financially or our time or just whatever we think we can't do without, and we give that up, God often, not always so, God often brings back even more abundantly and blesses us beyond what we thought or imagined.

Now we don't do it for that reason. I know a lot of people, if I give that, you hear those guys on Just send in your \$1,000. Just send in that \$1,000 seed.

By next month, that \$10,000 return, I don't know where it's going to come from. They say IRS tax credit or business endeavor, who knows? But you're going to get this. So many people give expecting, expecting, can't wait to get that return.

The heart's not right. We give not knowing what God's going to do in return, but know that he can bless us and often does. But we also see here that fear opposes faith.

That's the greatest enemy to faith. The greatest enemy to faith is what? Fear. Okay, we're learning here.

You can have, okay, faith God's called me to do this, but what if I fail? What if this doesn't work? Now we have to be wise. I've just told someone last week, there's a fine line between faith and presumption. Many people get in trouble presuming things.

So they're not really stepping out in faith. They're presuming it. It goes something like this.

God, here's what I'm doing. Now bless my plans. I'm presuming you're going to answer here, but faith is something completely different.

Faith knows God has spoke or you're trusting God. Sometimes I step out many times and say, Lord, I don't know if this is you or not. It seems like a good godly direction.

It lines up with your word. I've sought godly counsel and I'm going to step out in this direction, trusting you. It's very hard to go wrong doing that if you're trusting God through the whole thing.

And then also we see here how she put others first. She put Elisha first and God blesses that. And then again, another reminder, God's provision is often just enough.

Don't we want God, when he answers, don't we want, you know, we need a thousand dollars. Don't you want a hundred thousand so you can put 99,000 in the bank for later? It's always that rent is due or this is just enough, just enough provision, just enough. Doesn't always take it far beyond that.

And then verse 15, so she went away and did according to the word of Elisha and she and her whole household ate for many days. The bin of flour was not used up, nor did the jar of oil run dry according to the word of the Lord, which he spoke by Elisha. So she was blessed by that.

And then verse 17, now a widow's son died. Her son, I believe it's the same lady, her son dies. Now it happened after these things, that son of the woman who owed the house became sick, who owned the house became sick and his sickness was so serious that there was no breath left in him.

So she said, Elisha, what have I to do with you, O man of God? Have you come to me to bring my sin to remembrance and to kill my son? So he just blessed this family. Her oil was refilled, her flour was refilled. Everything's going good.

And then calamity. Now her son dies and she is blaming her sin. But it's another good reminder that calamity, sickness is not always linked to sin.

And that can happen in the Christian church. Sometimes we link everything to sin. Well, you must be sinning.

Is there any sin in your life? But then the other side often will say, well, it doesn't, God doesn't do that anymore. We do know that sometimes sin can be linked to sickness. James is clear on that.

So it's always good to do inventory and say, God, is there anything in me preventing this healing? Or is there anything in me causing this? Lord, show me and God will show you. But that's not always the case. Sometimes it's just like Jesus said, this person was not blind because of sin, but to show the glory of God.

And we see sometimes that God allows things so his glory is revealed. And he said to her, give me your son. So he took the son.

Then he cried out to the Lord and said, oh Lord, my God, have you also brought tragedy on this widow with whom I lodge? Listen to this. He cried out to the Lord and he stretched himself out on the child three times and cried out to the Lord and said, oh Lord, my God, I pray, let this child's soul come back to him. Then the Lord heard the voice of Elisha and the soul of the child came back to him and he revived.

Now what I want to do tonight, I didn't want to go into another section and go too long. I want to just do some challenging questions out there during worship where we can really ponder these. But I want to ask this, has anything dried up in your life? Is there anything dried up? Is God wanting to move you on? Like we saw with the brook or we saw in our own lives, is there something maybe that you're trying to hold on

to? You're trying to hang on to, you're trying to fight for, but God is drying it up and wants you to move on.

I don't know, but I know who does know. Yes, God in prayer, he will direct you. What fears that we learned earlier, what fears do you need to give to God? Is there anything that you're fearing right now? Parents, I bet that answer is yes.

You look at the culture, you look at what's going on, and fear can really raise its ugly head. What about kids that, your kids maybe aren't walking with the Lord and there's fear there of what might happen. Fear of taking that next step in what the Lord wants you to do.

Fear is always preventing faith. So I think it's a good time tonight during worship is to say, Lord, I'm giving you those fears. I have fears.

I have concerns that we have to give to God on a daily basis. Many people nowadays are getting that call from the doctor. This test result doesn't look good.

This doesn't look good. Here's what's happening, biopsies and surgeries, and there's just so much fear that's happening. It happens to all of us.

My brother-in-law, some of you know, you've asked me about it. He comes here. He sits back there.

He was down a ditch yesterday, I think, or the day before, and he had one of those saws, a gas saw, and they're very strong because they cut ductile pipe, metal pipe. I used to use those. The blade's about this long and it just spins thousands of times per second.

It's just, you're sawing this pipe, and it kicked back, and it hit his jaw, and it cut his jaw, broke his jawbone, and went and slit his throat, and there's a big opening in his throat. It was at Palmdale Hospital, and the doctor said, you are one lucky man because if that would have been a little deeper, or right on that main artery, there's no way you could stop that blood flow. And the fear, you know, family, and especially for work, and what about work, disability, and how long this is going to last, and just a lot of fears going on with my sister and talking to them, but they're, you know, they're handling it well, and that happens to a lot of us.

Something comes in our life. It challenges our faith. I've shared this before when we first planted the church, and it's, I mean, so many people are encouraging, don't get me wrong, but it's like one out of ten would say, oh, you're doing what? Do you don't plant churches on Saturday? Does that one work Saturday night? Nobody wants to go to church Saturday night.

I'm like, oh, I start to go home till morning. I don't know if this is going to work. Did God really tell us to do this? Or my favorite, I still run to people, is that pastor thing still working out for you? You know, is that what you're doing? Like, you just change, you know, I tried it for a little while.

It didn't work, and, you know, and just, and people, and they're like, why, why are you doing that? At that time, I was in real estate. I had to earn money for the family. I was doing really good, top five percent in our office.

They gave me an office. They wanted me to just keep, you know, the numbers, and I was getting four or five listings sometimes a month, and sales, and 30 buyers at one time. It was just busy, busy.

Oh, I mean, you're going to, you know, you're going to succeed in this and be the next whatever, and then God, a year into it, God said, hey, it's time to plant a church. Everybody's like, why? What, what's wrong with what you're doing? I don't know, but God, I think I'm supposed to plant a church. I don't, there's nothing wrong, and God would often use that.

He puts scaffolding up in our lives that we try to hang on to, and looking back when I was in construction, when I was 17, 18, 19, I fell back on that in 2001, 2002. I had my class A license where I drove, drove heavy equipment. I've let it elapse twice now, and I should have kept.

I'm going to let my real estate license elapse now, which you work so hard for because these are just scaffoldings that God gives us sometimes in our life, and a lot of fear comes in, though, when we're, when we're making different decisions and we're trusting God, but let me tell you this. If you sincerely want to trust God, and you say, God, I don't know where this decision is going to go. I don't even know if this is you or not.

There's, there's integrity here. It seems to line up according to your word. There's an open door, but I don't know.

Would you show me? I'm humbling submitting to your will. Would you show me? He'll open them and close amazing doors. He shut doors that I thought nobody could shut, and he opened doors, tremendous doors that nobody can open on their own unless God, and God will honor that and say, Lord, I'm, I'm afraid.

I'm afraid. Here's what I say sometimes. Lord, I trust you a hundred and a hundred thousand percent.

I don't trust me, though, all the time, so I don't know. Is this me or is this you? Would you show us what to do? God, show us what that looks like. One thing I'll tell you about that, um, something we're praying about, I don't even know what it looks like, but on Sunday mornings, it's, you know, there's a lot of new faces.

We've got 30 new people coming to the meet and greet this month, and a lot of people come, but a lot of people leave. It's kind of the treadmill church, I call it, you know. Okay, I'm enough.

I've heard enough of this guy. I'm out of here, or they move a lot, tons of families moving. I've talked to other pastors.

We've never seen this amount of people moving ever before, especially out of California. It's just, it's just happening all the time, and at some point, though, people are asking what are we going to start a third service because the sanctuary is full at the second, the balcony is getting full. We're just going to trust God.

We've got an overflow room. We'll see how that works. We put 30 chairs in one Sunday or a couple Sundays ago, and, and we're just trusting on God.

I don't have answers. I, I don't know what that looks like. I don't know, because that's a, that's a big step.

You taxed, you taxed the worship team a lot more, the ushers, right? Mike, you're back, you're going, oh yeah. Myself, you know, we got to, you got to be strategic. There's nothing to rush into.

There's nothing wrong with, with filling it up more. You know, there is room, but what happens, people, you know, they come in, they see a full church. It's hard to get seated.

They want to, they want to invite your friends, so there's a dynamic there that takes place. It's called the 80-20 rule and church growth models and things like that, but of course, we trust God. Not, not, you know, people can stand up if they're really wanting to come, like what they did with Chuck Smith when he started Calvary Chapel.

They're sitting on the front row, you know, hippies in their, no shoes on, teaching the Bible, and so just those kind of things. We don't know, Lord, is this you? Is it us? Is it, what are you wanting us to do? And he would, he'll make that clear. Planting churches.

Do we plant churches? Well, if there's no open doors, that's a no. If there's an open door, then there's a yes. So we, we just, we kind of wait on God in my own life.

There's fears with my kids, with my children, as, as I get older, they get older, so many, you know, how do you provide for them? Now I understand when they said they'll eat you out of house and home, and they're still little. Like this is, this cannot continue. We have to get our own cow and our own goat and our own chickens, and, you know, it's, it's, it's just amazing at the fear that can come in, but fear always opposes faith.

You can't have both. You really can't. You'll struggle with it, but fear cannot dominate your life, and you'll also have faith dominate your life.

One or the other is going to dominate. It's going to be that controlling aspect. When it's fear, it's you wake up in the morning.

What's on the news? What's going to happen? Oh no, we get that fear going, and I don't know, and we operate in that, and we make decisions based on that, and we treat others based on our fear, and we start to think along those lines, but when faith is active, that's a whole new ball game. We walk out boldly. We have faith that God is going to move.

We trust in God, and we live according to His Word. Here comes fear. Okay, fear, go sit.

I'm going to kick you out of there, and you begin to take your, those thoughts captive. That's what, when Paul said you don't even have a spirit of fear, meaning there's the spiritual side of you, that the Holy Spirit, it's not a spirit of fear. It's a spirit of peace, and of a sound mind, so think about that.

What fears do you need to give to God tonight? Is it parenting? Is it your health? Is it not understanding certain things? Is it your job? Is it your marriage? Are you fearing your marriage? There's a lot of people on the brink of divorce. A lot of marriages crumbling around. It's good to give God these fears.

Also, what dead things need to be revived, just like we saw with this son? Is there something in your life that was dead, and it needs to be revived? Something that God has given you? Something that God spoke to you? Something, a passion you had? Something you've wanted to do? A dream that God has said, hey, I believe this is a God-given dream, but what happens? It dies, and I believe God sometimes wants to resurrect those. What needs to be revived? Take it to the Lord, and then also like this point, he cried out to the Lord, and then again, it says he cried out, and you'll often see, especially in the Bible, and I wish we did it more in our own personal lives. You don't have to do it here, obviously, or get loud at home or

anything, but there should be a crying out.

There should be a passionate plea, like when Jesus saw Jerusalem, he cried out, oh, Jerusalem. When he saw the people, and he saw their spiritual need, he cried out. It says, he who hungers and thirsts for righteousness will be filled.

If you hunger and you thirst, cry out to me. My burden is easy. I will give you rest, and you see Jesus crying out from the cross.

My God, my God. There's this crying out. You see the prophets crying out.

You see the disciples, people throughout the Bible, they cried out, Hannah, give me a child. Rachel, give me a child, lest I die. There's a crying out there, and it's very biblical, and I think sometimes the church has to get back to that.

Again, God's not looking at the volume, but he's looking at the heart. There's a pleading. There's a travailing.

The old saints used to say we would travail in prayer all night until God answered. We held on until God came, and he answered, and we fought, and we fought the flesh. We fought the desire to fear, and to run, and retreat, and we pressed in.

Just that word pressed in, what does that give you an idea of? A pressing machine, and pressing in, and this concept out there that Christianity is easy. Let me put this in the microwave. One minute.

Oh, there we go. My steak is done. Two minutes or whatever, and we have this idea that everything's quick, and pressing in is not seeking God, waiting on God.

It's not quick. I'm still in the process of that many, many weeks or months later, still pressing in on issues, still pleading for God to do something, still crying out, but you fight, and you fight again, and you get back up, and you fight again, and you cry out, and you say, God, I'm not laying hold of you. I'm not letting go like Jacob did.

I'm not letting go of you until you bless me, and that begins to just well up inside of you. He cried out to God, and I'm wondering how many of us need to do that this evening. Maybe even come to the altar.

You know, it should be a place of comfort. The altar should be. It should be a place of, okay, God, I'm submitting.

I'm laying down my life to you. Just a crying. Again, it doesn't even have to be vocals.

Oh, God. Crying out could be something in the heart and quietness of your soul where you're wrestling with God. That's why daily devotionals are so important.

This is when we cry out to God in our time with God. This is why I just, just a tip. I have the word of God open sometimes, and I'll just look at certain verses.

I'll read, of course, but I'll listen to worship, and I'll just cry out, God, your word says, your word says, if you seek me, you will find me. God, I want to seek you. Let justice run down like a river.

Let righteous run down like a mighty stream. God said, put away the sound of your instruments. Put away your worship team, and let justice run down.

Let righteousness, and I pray, oh, God, what does that look like? Look at our government. Look at our schools. God, we're so broken before you.

God, we cry out. God, we cry out. We want to make a difference, and you begin to plead the blood of Christ.

You begin to get passionate. You begin to get fired up about the things of God because you're looking at his word. You're looking to worship in the spirit of the living God.

As we just sang it, spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me. Fall in this room. Follow my families.

Don't you want your kids to wake up hungry for the word of God instead of hungry for Netflix? God will answer. Have your children, have your spouse wake up hungry for God, and you plead. You stand in behalf, on behalf of that person before God.

You actually come between the person and God, and you're there as an intercessor. What does an intercessor do? Are they bored? Ask a mom crying out for her child hooked on heroin if she's bored during prayer, or ask a dad if he's pleading for the soul of his daughter as she screams out of the house, runs, and says, I'm going to never come back. Are they bored? No, they cry out.

You have to get your heart back to that place of crying out. Revival. We see revival here.

Dead comes back to life. Isn't it interesting? What we're praying for, what we're hoping for, is we see it in this example of this boy. All revival is, you hear me talk about revival a lot, and it's our only hope.

The reason I mention that is we've crossed a line many years ago. We've taken God out of the schools, out of the government offices. We are so politically correct it makes me sick sometimes.

Oh, there goes another cross at a memorial. God forbid an atheist gets offended. There goes another cross off the sign on a freeway.

Remember when California removed something off the seal? Off its seal. It's been for, I don't know, how many years? I don't want to say the wrong, 150 years. Who knows? We see this move towards even assisted suicide.

I'm depressed. I'm this, and here's a pill. Just end it.

We see all these things. It's just out of control. So our only hope is God reviving his people.

What other hope is there? 2020, the next election. Hollywood's getting more upset at Christians. The world's getting more upset at Christians.

They're wanting to silence what we do. They're wanting to get rid of God. So you need God to revive.

What is that? To awaken what is dead. What is dead? A spear-filled, passionate church on fire for God that makes a difference in their community. They run for office.

They pray for those in office. They make a difference in their schools. They write curriculum.

All areas of life is saturated by the power and presence of God. The revival books I read, they closed down bars. They closed down saloons.

Prostitutes came to know the Lord. They gave up that trade. Cities were transformed.

They'd be walking down the streets worshipping and crying out to God. Why? Because revival. God awoke his people.

And that's what needs to happen. That's why the church, we should try to make it a point to be at the Sunday morning prayer and worship times or Wednesday nights. These are going to be mainly designed for our goal still is to get back to just praying and worshipping a little bit of the word and just being a time of coming together and crying out to God and getting that midweek jump back.

I don't know about you, but by Wednesday, I've seen enough news stories. I've heard enough negative press. I've been visiting people in hospitals or whatever it is.

And you just need to be recharged. You need to revive, be revived. So that's what I mean by revival.

We see that perfect example of this boy. Something that is dead comes back to life. God revives the people.

And you'll see a Christian. Many times Christians need revival. They just don't know it until they hear a convicting sermon because they're going through the motions, going to church.

They have a Bible. They might read it, but they're just dead to the things of God. And God revives that person.

And then they become on fire for God. That's revival. God is reviving his people, his church, if they want it.

So that's my thought for you tonight or my question. Do you want that revival fire of God? Do you want God to revive something in your life that's been dead? Or maybe you've never experienced that before. Maybe you've never experienced the revival fire of God.

What it is, it's a burning passion for God. You look at the clock, you're like, oh, I want to get up now. It's only 3 a.m., it's only 4 a.m., it's only whatever it is.

I can't wait until I get up and spend time with God. I can't wait until I get home and I can read the Bible or I can read books on prayer. I can't wait to put on worship music.

And I can't wait to run into somebody that needs help and needs prayer. It's the revival fire of God. Everywhere you go, someone or something is touched.

And it's living for God. There's a passion. There's excitement.

Think about this for a minute. And I get bored sometimes, so don't think I'm super Christian. But when we're talking about the living God, shouldn't we be excited? The living God that spoke to us in his word.

The living God that fills us with his spirit. That says, go out and do great exploits. Do wonderful things for me.

Pray for those who are sick. Witness on the street. Lead people to the throne room of my grace.

Build them up. Encourage them. Make a difference in your sight.

The living God who puts all this, the universe, in the palm of his hands. He says, I'm going to speak directly to you. I want to spend time with you.

I want to hear your prayers. I want to hear your cries. And I will answer the cries of my people.

Just call on me and I will answer. Where does your help come from? From me. The living God.

That should not be boring. I'm sorry. Everything else should be boring compared to that.

So we have to ask the question, why then is it boring for many people? Why is God boring? That'd be a good book title. Why is God boring? Why is the church and the Bible and all these things often boring? It's because we need that revival fire. Listen, I've lived on the board side of the property line and I've lived on fire for God's side.

And there is no difference. I mean, there's a huge difference. You know what I'm trying to say, right? There's a huge difference.

There's no going back. It's like night and day. It's wanting to live for God and wanting to ignore God and not have anything to do with God because God's going to ruin my life.

I just want to do things the way I want to do them. He's going to ruin my job if I speak up. He's going to ruin me having fun.

And we begin to just live in this worldly mindset. If we have a passion for the things of the world and not a passion for God, then that's what's controlling us. The love of the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, the pride of life.

And God wants to revive that, I believe. So those are the questions I want to throw out to you. I believe they've been on my heart all week.

Has something dried up in your life? Has something dried up in your life? Is God wanting to move you on, but you're holding on? You're holding on. You're not going to let it go, but you know God wants you to let it go. Let that go tonight.

Also, what fears do you need to give to God? What fears? A lot of us struggle with anxiety, fear. It's debilitating. Yeah, I'm so worried about... You fill in the blank.

What fear do you need to give to God tonight? I believe he'll alleviate that pain. What dead things need to be revived in your life? Something that is dead. A dream you had.

Maybe a prayer for a loved one. Maybe a prayer for a child. Have you ever prayed for somebody? You were so passionate about that prayer, and then a year later, you don't even pray anymore.

What happened? We lost that fire. We lost that zeal. We lost that passion we once had.

And God's not on our timetable. See, remember that. God's not on a timetable.

He often uses a timetable for us, but he's not on a timetable. So if there's something you feel, you know what, you feel it resonating. You feel, okay, it's time to press in again.

It's time. I've got some things on my list. They've been getting some dust lately.

Now I need to put that list out in front of me. Say, I'm going to pray for these things. There's things out there that are so big.

It has to be God. If you can do it on your own, it's probably not God. So pray for things.

Press in. What dead things need to be revived? And if you need revival in your own life, then cry out. Cry out to God.

Just say, I need that. I need to be filled again with God's spirit. And these lessons from Elisha, that's why it's called a prophet on fire, a prophet of fire, and he was on fire, is because that's what we need back to church.

That's how you're going to repair your marriage. That's how you're going to make a difference in your workplace. That's how you're going to make a difference in your society.

That's how you're going to be a better parent, a better grandparent, is to be filled with the fire of God. We all know what being filled with the world gets us. Nowhere, nothing, but to be filled with that fire of God.

And it begins with a passion. It begins with the first step. The first step I ever took to being filled with God's spirit mightily is this one.

Just step and say, God, I need you. I need that. I need to be filled again.

I need that flame of passion. And that's where it starts. You don't have to have a checklist of 10 things.

Cancel Netflix. Go through your movie choices, your media choices. Do this, do this, oh.

There might be some good things God's convicting you of. But the first step is admitting and repenting and saying, I need that fire back. I need that passion back.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/31/SID31882.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/shane-idleman/difficulties-stepping-stones-not-stumbling-blocks/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net